

Spotlight On Recovery

Giving a Voice to the Therapeutic Community



October 2001-
October 2021

Robin Graham, Publisher

IT'S A
CELEBRATION!!

Spotlight on Recovery Magazine
20th Anniversary Issue

OCTOBER 2021

R. Graham Publishing Co. LLC

9602 Glenwood Road, #140
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To Correspond with Ms. Graham, send your letters to
 R. Graham Publishing Company, LLC
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Letter from the Publisher

October 2021

Twenty years ago this October, I founded Spotlight on Recovery Magazine. I used writing therapy to begin a dialogue with people about healing after going through personal trauma.

I began this journey a few weeks after 9/11 in 2001. Before 9/11, I knew about personal trauma, as a domestic violence survivor. What was unknown to me was that trauma would be at the forefront for years to come. Every year, we remember the innocent lives lost on 9/11, and the trauma remains.

Now here I stand twenty years later following the Co-vid 19 epidemic that claimed over 700,000 lives and counting. The survivors dealing with loss, mental health challenges, unrest, and trauma.

Last year, we witnessed the violence suffered by Black Americans at the hands of the police over the years hit a boiling level with the murder of Mr. George Floyd in 2020. The countless families who also lost their loved ones to police shootings relived their own trauma again.



We witnessed law enforcement defending our nation's capital on January 6, 2021, being beaten, dragged, crushed, and degraded. The common word that comes to mind is... Trauma.

Spotlight on Recovery provides a platform for the survivors of trauma to tell their story without judgment. Within our pages, a writer or reader can find truth, salvation, empathy, trust, love, and support. I recognize the many writers who contributed over the years to help someone else living with trauma. In this issue, you will hear from contributing writers and readers about the impact that Spotlight on Recovery has had on their lives.

I hope you will support me through the next 20 years by subscribing to the magazine or purchasing advertisement in my magazine or on my site.

Everyone has a "Recovery Story." No matter what your story is, no matter where you live, no matter what you've lost, you are not alone. I look forward to meeting you and others who are in search of a way to "Spotlight Their Recovery."

Robin Graham
Robin Graham
Founder/Publisher





Spotlight on Recovering Me

By Guillermo Alvarez

I've never had a voice... But I learned through poetry, music, and journaling that my soul could flow through the ink of my pen, and through the help of my friend Anthony Billings, I wrote for Ms. Graham at Spotlight on Recovery.

I was nervous because I have never written for a national magazine. The dread of rejection was heavy on my shoulders. I waited for weeks on end, then I received my first contract. Ms. Graham liked what I wrote. I was overwhelmed with joy.

For years of my incarceration, I had been working on fixing myself; and growing into a Godly man; burying the ugly monster I once was. The platform Spotlight on Recovery provided me with was monumental in my development. Seeing my words spoken only in my mind on paper for everybody to see was so beautiful. It was empowering... It was truly a gift from the Most High.

Making efforts to approach the various topics offered allowed me to really challenge myself, as a human, a man adjusting to this new world, while still surviving in prison, and forged my craft as a writer. (Smiling as I write this). Thanks Ms. Graham, I can honestly and confidently say I am a writer.

My family posts each article on their social media pages too. My mother brags about her (Incarcerated) son, the fancy writer. My daughters get so happy

each time they can read my work and tell me they are proud of me. Ms. Graham's magazine has allowed me to pay for clothes, school supplies, trips to movies and restaurants for my babies and even take care of my own needs in here. That autonomy behind enemy lines, is so liberating and fulfilling. I'm in a position to depend on others and by the grace of Yahweh, I've been blessed to give back, financially to my kin, but most importantly, emotionally and intellectually.

I've never received any feedback from readers, but if anyone of my works touched only one person outside of my circle that in itself has been payment and success on its own.

For those of you in my struggle, persevere... maintain your craft, keep the faith, you matter. To those of you reading, your story is just as important. Please find courage to put your words out there for the world, because you never know who may need to hear (or read) what you have to say.

Ms. Graham, you are a Queen and a Saint. Thank you so much for the platform; for the opportunity, and for giving me a voice. Thank you deeply and humbly.

Sincerely,

Guillermo Alvarez

To correspond with the contributing writers, send an e-mail to Ms. Graham if their address is not listed on the Contributing Writer's page.





“To this day, its pages are still changing lives for the better, one writer, and/or reader at a time.” -Anthony Billings

I was in the third year of my 24-year prison sentence when I wrote my first article entitled, “Always Grateful,” and submitted it to Spotlight on Recovery. Having no realistic expectations of having my article accepted, I continued to live the same kind of life that got me into prison in the first place. Then, I got a letter from Robin Graham.

I can honestly say that ever since she accepted “Always Grateful” into her pages, my life changed for the better. I developed confidence in my writing abilities. Thousands of people would read my piece and that filled me with pride. Finally, it proved to me that there was a positive and productive way to spend my time behind prison walls.

Fast-forward nine years from that day, I am now a married college graduate with more than (45) published pieces to my credit and I own the rights to

my own clothing brand. All of these things likely would not have been possible, and my negative mindset would have stayed the same, if it wasn't for Robin Graham and Spotlight on Recovery opening up the door to a completely new world for me.

So, what has Spotlight on Recovery meant to me as a contributing writer? It's simple and can be described in a single word... change. To this day, its pages are still changing lives for the better, one writer, and/or reader at a time.

Therefore, thank you for helping me change my life Spotlight on Recovery. I wish you twenty more years of success!

Sincerely,
Anthony Billings

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Receive 12 copies of 6-8 issues per year. Perfect for Youth Centers, Walk-in Clinics, Community Bookstores, Hair Salons and Barber Shops.

Contact Robin Graham
347-831-9373





A Fresh Start, A New Man

By Arcane Element

I believe it was sometime around the Summer of 2016 when I first began writing for Spotlight on Recovery. When I made my first foray into writing for the magazine, I don't think I really understood the significance of what the publication itself was all about, or what an extraordinary movement and community I was about to become a part of. Looking back now, all I can say is that this experience has not only humbled me but has also helped me transform and reinvent myself in many life-changing ways.

Roughly 2 years before I penned my first article, I had lost my mother, the most important person in my world, to her battle with lung cancer. And, truth be told, I was still in a really dark place when I wrote my first article. After her death, I became a very bitter and angry person. I was living in a constant toxic state of a mixture of both rage and depression, and it seemed that no matter what methods I employed to cope, I still wasn't getting anywhere near a better place.

Now, there are some who may believe that 2 years is a long time to grieve, but for me, those 2 years spent in a single man cell was not such a long time. When you have that much free time without distractions and necessary social interactions, you can lose yourself to dark thoughts and negative behavioral patterns rather quickly.

So as I found myself lost in time, I began using meth in an effort to numb the pain I was feeling. The problem with using drugs for that purpose is that, over time, it takes a large quantity to fill the void. Furthermore, drug use is not a solution to a problem but rather a temporary replacement problem, lasting only as long as the high does. Instead of realizing this truth early on, I began consuming more drugs until I virtually became a zombie, only going through the motions of living.

My life changed when I found out about Spotlight on Recovery. It was only through writing for Spotlight and reading the words of my fellow writers that I eventually became strong enough to cast off the

yoke of drug co-dependency. The testimonies of my fellow writers touched me in a way I never would've thought was possible. I identified with their trials because, in one way or another, they were me. Their courage in sharing how they overcame their pain with the world gave me the strength I needed to learn to love myself again. I've been clean and sober for 4 years now. I have my fellow contributors to thank for that, so thank you guys (and ladies, of course!) for showing me how to break free from my shackles. Without you, I may still be lost or worse.

Since I began loving myself again, I've been using the written word as a therapeutic outlet for all my dirty, mean, petty and savagely selfish thoughts. I wish that wasn't a necessary exercise, but I'm only human and I've learned that it's better I write these negative reflections of myself on paper where they can be easily discarded rather than allowing them even the slightest opportunity to show their ugly faces in my actions. Because I use my pen for therapy instead of exhibiting harmful behavior, these negative musings have become less of a factor. As a result, I've been able to turn my focus towards channeling more positive and productive energy into not only my life, but my work as well.

At this point in time, I would like to take out a moment to pay homage to a very special and incredible person, Ms. Robin Graham. She is truly an angel in human form. It's only through the ambition and generosity of this amazing woman that I'm able to do something I love from behind prison walls. No one else was willing to give me a chance because I had never been published before and I don't know how to write a good query letter/cover letter. However, Ms. Graham gave me an opportunity to do something that would not only help others but would also help me achieve my goal of becoming a published writer. Since I first made my debut writing for her, Ms. Graham has continued to validate my penmanship, give me encouragement to keep writing and most importantly, she has continued to provide me with a platform on which to have my voice heard.





Because of these acts of kindness and compassion, I now count Robin among my few friends. She has become a very important person to me and though she may not have known it until this very moment, she has set an example for me on many levels, both personal and professional. She has taught me that if you want to accomplish something meaningful in your life, then you have to dedicate your time to making it happen in spite of whatever obstacles may attempt to come in between you and your objective. She has never said these words to me but has shown me by example through her continuing determination to publish *Spotlight on Recovery* to help those who are in need make it through and overcome whatever struggle they may be facing the way she has already helped her contributing writers. I only hope that I can someday be the same beacon of hope to someone else that she has been to me and countless others.

Both Robin and her publication, *Spotlight on Recovery*, has helped me to become a better writer, a better friend, and a better man in general. They have also helped me to become a stronger person by arming me with the knowledge that just because you go through something, hit a couple of rough patches, or collect a few scrapes, bumps, and bruises from the bully that life can sometimes be doesn't mean that you are weak. It doesn't mean that you are defeated.

In the words of the great steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, "No one is ever defeated until defeat is accepted as the reality." So, every single day of my life I go forth bearing these words in mind. In fact, they have become a daily mantra that I use to remind myself to continue to fight for the things I want in my life in the face of adversarial forces. I implore others to let the words of Andrew Carnegie serve them in a similar capacity.

In the spirit of maintaining an indomitable state of mind, I want to share a poem with you that I stumbled upon in my studies by someone named W. E. Henley. See if it resonates with you the way that it does with me. The title of the poem I'd like to share with you is "Invictus."

Invictus

By W.E. Henley

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

In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced or cried aloud,
Under the bludgeoning's of chance.
My head is bloody but unbowed.

Beyond this vail of doubt and fear,
Looms but the terror of the shade.
And, yet the passing of the years
Finds and will find me unafraid.

It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll
I am the master of my fate,
I am the Captain of my Soul.

This poem has helped me make it through some difficult times because it has served as a reminder that no matter how stacked the odds are against me, I will only fall if I were to allow myself to give up on my struggle. I'm not saying that it will be easy and because if it were easy then no one would need help. But if you never stop believing in yourself, everything you fight for in your life will be realized in the end.

Sometimes people are too ashamed of their personal struggle to ask anyone for help because they have a fear of being judged by people who either can't or refuse to try to understand what they're going through. Maybe their holding onto a misguided notion of pride that's preventing them from asking someone for help because they feel that they can get through it on their own. Or maybe it's simply that they don't know where to turn for help. There is an abundance of help to be





found out there, but you have to want that help. That's the first step to healing yourself.

For these reasons, I believe that everyone should have access to Spotlight on Recovery magazine, regardless of whether you buy your own subscription

or read someone else's copy. The magazine hosts a community of people who understand you because we've been you. Find help in our words.

Congratulations!!

To our Long Time Friend, Robin Graham from Spotlight on Recovery, who is celebrating the 20th Anniversary of her magazine.

Wow! Where does the time go?

I guess it goes by fast, when you Love what you do.

Thank You for your continued Patronage

Continue Your Great Work!

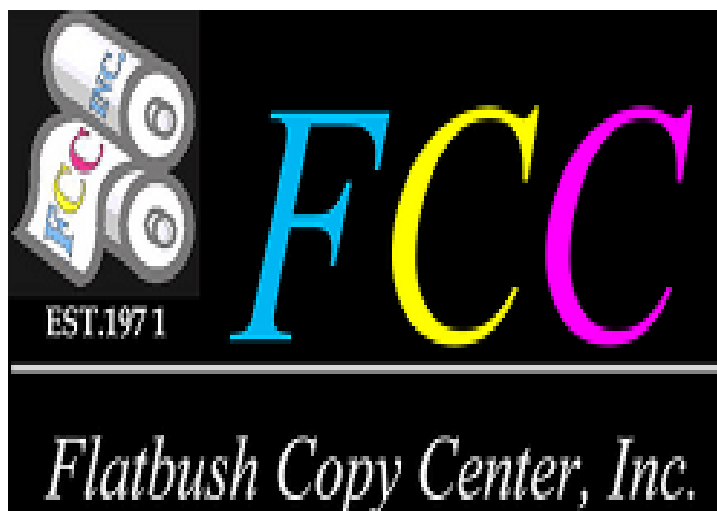
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“Spotlight on Recovery Magazine is a periodical that taps into what is current and relevant to our personal well-being and those in our community that we may have previously ignored.” – Lydia Ferguson

My name is Lydia Ferguson, and I have the privilege of reading “Spotlight on Recovery” on a regular bi-monthly basis since the August 2020 issue. I do not use the word privilege lightly. I personally know the founder and publisher, Robin Graham, and admire her many accomplishments. As a single mother, she has also worked full-time in addition to her dedication and commitment to publishing “Spotlight on Recovery.” The foundation of this magazine is rooted in positivity, perseverance, encouragement, and growth to the betterment of ourselves on some level.

In the past, I have seen earlier issues of this periodical and the format and tactile quality of the current issues invites you to read the magazine from cover to cover. In the recent issues that I have read, it usually begins with a poem that can be thought provoking, stirring images and emotions that may not normally occur to us. After reading the poems, I generally look toward the back of the magazine for information about the author. Surprisingly, I discover that other articles may have also been contributed by that individual. I would like to mention that I’m not a person that is readily moved by a poem, but I have been by a few that I have read.

The Letter from the Publisher is also insightful and addresses the theme of the contents to follow. I do also enjoy some of the graphics and pictures that may accompany the many articles. Many of the contributions

draw upon the personal experiences of the authors and can be quite profound, eliciting a response as a reader that can linger as you attempt to identify to some extent with what is being conveyed, and intimately shared.

The authors are varied with diverse backgrounds, and ages. Some of the articles are particularly poignant. This publication reaches and exceeds its goal in regards to being therapeutic for the community. The magazine addresses real life, contemporary topics e.g. dealing with the Pandemic, the 2020 Presidential Election, etc. and issues that in some cases we may want to repress, but to some degree realize that those issues may need to be recognized and acknowledged. Spotlight on Recovery Magazine is a periodical that taps into what is current and relevant to our personal well-being and those in our community that we may have previously ignored. The “spotlight” is being shined so that we can embrace and empathize with one another during life’s journey, which is usually a continuum of learning through shared experiences and communication.

Congratulations, Robin!

As a reader, I am sincerely grateful for the time and energy that you have devoted to publishing “Spotlight on Recovery” of which the contents are significantly meaningful to your reading audience.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233





“A Safe Platform That Other Magazines Do Not Really Provide in These Circumstances” – Nathan Gilbert

I have had the privilege of being a part of this magazine for a few years now and I am beyond grateful that a magazine like this exists.

I have always been into writing, whether it is poems, little inspiring notes to myself, or others, or just about my life. I just never knew what to do with them or who to share them with. Most of the people I used to surround myself with were too “tough” to read them or just didn’t care, so I kept them to myself.

Then one day, a friend of mine told me about this Spotlight on Recovery magazine. He told me about the purpose behind it and that it was for anyone that has gone through trials and struggles, and anyone with an ear who cares. I was amazed that a magazine like this was created, a magazine for individuals who are or were incarcerated. People who were lost and those who found meaning in their lives through the hardships they faced. A related topic for everyone, either firsthand or second hand, we all have a story to tell, and this is the perfect platform for that.

Some individuals were fortunate to have a support system and find the coping skills needed to overcome their situation. Others were less fortunate and that is where this magazine and Ms. Robin Graham come in. Her passion for finding a platform for individuals like her, who struggled through countless obstacles and her love for helping others, led her to provide a safe place for people to share their pain, their struggles, and their stories. It goes beyond remarkable.

As soon as you open this magazine up, you sense and feel the pureness. To me, no matter what kind of situation I’m reading about, it opens my eyes and gives me insight on not only what that person is going through, or went through, but it has me thinking about the thousands of others going through similar

situations.

Spotlight on Recovery is a safe platform that other magazines do not really provide in these circumstances. It is a voice for the voiceless. It provides an insight that most do not understand. I know for me, when I share my story, I won’t be judged. I won’t be ashamed, and I hope and pray my story shines light to others letting them know they’re not alone. I hope my stories let them know that they should not be ashamed of their own story. No matter what you’re going through, you’re still here, you’re still believing and hoping for better, and I believe Spotlight on Recovery can help.

This platform offers every reader, every person who contributes opportunities to share and help at the same time. I am extremely grateful for this magazine.

Therefore, with all my heart, I congratulate not just Spotlight on Recovery but the people behind it; the readers, the writers, and the person who helped to make all this possible. Ms. Robin Graham, thank you for blessing us all with this great unique opportunity and allowing us to share with open arms.

Thank you, for this amazing platform. Congratulations on the success of Spotlight on Recovery, and a huge congrats, on overcoming your story. None of this would be possible without you and your dedication you put in day in and day out to provide a safe, understanding, and loving place for all of us.

You are amazing and Spotlight on Recovery is amazing.

Thank you and congratulations.

Nathan Gilbert





“Spotlight on Recovery is the first magazine to encourage my creativity while supporting my self-examination. It prompted me to look deeper into myself and wrestle with those uncomfortable emotions, concepts, and ideas.”

– Troy Glover

The most important item needed during a natural disaster is a flashlight. Wandering around in the dark is more dangerous than the disaster itself. Internal and external conflict in our lives is like a natural disaster plunging our lives into darkness. Having a source of illumination will help you maneuver past those dangers that pepper the landscape of life. Spotlight on Recovery is that source of light exposing those hazards, which needed to be avoided while providing a community of refuge.

Spotlight on Recovery is the first magazine to encourage my creativity while supporting my self-examination. It prompted me to look deeper into myself and wrestle with those uncomfortable emotions, concepts, and ideas. Knowing I am not judged or criticized for my past actions, motivates me to hug my anger, dance with my anxieties, and shake hands with fears. Having a healthy and safe place to share parts of myself allows me to confidently move and shake off shackles of feeling timid, allowing me to find beauty beneath my ugliness.

In addition, Spotlight on Recovery is a place where I can share my personal experiences. My poverty creating stupidity becomes a wonderful wealth of wisdom for readers who might be running within the hamster wheel I have already treaded. By reading the stories of my past struggles with alcoholism, domestic violence, and mental illness, I can help readers avoid pitfalls I struggled to climb out of, realizing there are no good ways to make bad choices. I believe my stories will awake someone to the redundancy of similar choices and encourage them to get off the wheel. Sharing stories about the life lessons from my teachers, my sibling relationships, and respect for my elders creates a community with me and the audience of readers. It's like a family I have chosen instead of being born into.

Spotlight on Recovery has given me a sense of accomplishment and pride. Sitting alone in a prison

cell with nothing but your thoughts, you quickly start noticing everything you failed at. I failed at being a father, I was absent; I failed at being a brother, the protector; I failed at being a husband, a supporter; and I failed at being a son, a comforter. It was easy for me to feel sorry for myself while believing I was trash. The noon sky was dark and stormy the day I saw my poetry and personal life stories published in Spotlight on Recovery. I sat alone in my cell and allowed tears to slide down my face with the falling rain. For almost fifty years, I caused nothing but heartache and sadness, yet, in that moment of publication I knew I can make a difference in someone else's life, and I knew that small accomplishment would make my grandma and mom proud. My life is not worthless.

Lastly, reading submissions from other contributors helps me gain perspective in my own life. Knowing my struggles are not unique gives me a sense of connectedness. Through other people's stories and poetry, I have witnessed vulnerability, strength, and courage I have incorporated into my own life. Spotlight on Recovery writers have shown me vulnerability is a step towards recovery. When I allow people to know the real me, it helps dispel those false senses of guilt and shame, two harmful traits which hamper recovery. Yet, before recovery can begin, you must also be honest with yourself.

Writers for Spotlight on Recovery magazine, exhibit being open and honest with themselves; creating an openness and honesty within others. I no longer need to put up false fronts. I need not lie to myself to make it through the day. By taking these steps, I have found strength in those moments I wanted to crash out and courage to face the morning the next day because I knew I was not alone anymore, I have a community of readers.

Ms. Robin Graham, Spotlight on Recovery magazine is where I found my talent for writing,





a platform to share my experiences, and have an opportunity to feel proud about helping others. Conversely, your writers have taught me shame and guilt will hold back my recovery and my integrity.

My mistakes are not unique, we all are broken in some way. Yet, only by exposing the cracks and chips on my heart will mending begin. All those whom I thought would pull me down and hurt me, will actually rise up to protect me. For twenty years Ms. Graham, I have wandered through prisons with the light from a match

thinking I was doing well healing myself emotionally, socially, and spiritually, alone. However, I was only fooling myself. Now I have a Spotlight illuminating the whole world before me, and I can see oh, so much more.

Thank you.

Troy Glover

Congratulations to Ms. Robin Graham and the entire team of the Spotlight on Recovery magazine on the 20th anniversary of the magazine. You and your magazine are an inspiration to many. Keep up the great work!
- Tzippy G, graphic designer for the magazine since 2016

tig
design





“The words printed in these pages go to a special audience, an audience who needs words of encouragement, kindness, and compassion.”

-Ana Gonzalez Ribeiro

The first time Robin responded to my email inquiry about writing for Spotlight on Recovery magazine, I was thrilled and so grateful. I was a relatively new writer and I felt honored that she was taking a chance on me by letting me write for her publication. This was 11 years ago, since then, I’ve had the honor of writing several articles for Spotlight on Recovery and always get the same thrill when it’s published and I get to see it in print.

Several milestones have marked these past 11 years; I’ve had my son, continued to work on my writing career and have proudly shown off my Spotlight on Recovery pieces to family and friends. Even though I’ve had the opportunity to write for various publications during this time, I feel like Spotlight on Recovery has a special place in my heart. It’s the first magazine that took a chance on me, and the first one that helped me build my confidence as a writer. This magazine has not only helped others through difficult times, but it’s also helped me and for that I am eternally grateful.

The words printed in these pages go to a special audience, an audience who needs words of


encouragement, kindness, and compassion. The articles on the pages of Spotlight on Recovery written by many of its talented writers help support its readers and help them stay strong in difficult situations. I love that we can help others with the words we write, but in doing so, often times we are also helping ourselves because we as writers, also feel fulfilled and accomplished when doing this work. We know that our words have the potential to really help someone in need to lift them up and in doing so, this lifts us.

I am so thankful to Robin for allowing me to write for her wonderful and meaningful magazine throughout all these years and I am grateful to the audience that has read my articles. I hope that my pieces have helped, inspired or just made them pause and think.

I know that writing for this magazine has immensely helped me.

Thank you, Robin.

Ana Gonzalez Ribeiro



Order our 20th Anniversary Back Pack for \$25.00 and receive a free copy of the 20th Anniversary issue and a Spotlight on Recovery keychain and button. To order, send a check or money made payable to

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“What I do know is that I am extremely grateful, for the numerous times that Spotlight on Recovery has validated my thoughts and feelings. By encouraging me to write, and by providing opportunities for my writings to be published in your magazine, you’ve provided a platform that acknowledges me.”

– Kabasha Griffin-El

Dear Spotlight on Recovery,

Today is a day where I’ve found myself in deep contemplation about life in general and the many things I’m grateful for that help me through each day. June 20th was my 50th birthday. Two weeks later, July 5th marked the 26th year of my crimes and imprisonment. I was Honorably Discharged from the Marine Corps in 1993. In 1995, I was twenty-four years old when I caused someone’s death and another to be badly beaten. My actions devastated many people’s lives, including my own. More often than not, I feel extremely isolated and find myself fighting moments of overwhelming sadness. Of course, one of the primary goals of imprisonment is to secure physical isolation. Yet, the mental, psychological, and social aspects of isolation are the constant threats to my mental wellness. Although I’m surrounded by more than a thousand men currently imprisoned here with me, this strain has overcome me numerous times. Perhaps it’s my nature as a self recognized introvert that contributes to, or even creates the overwhelming feelings of being off on my own, alone and misunderstood.

I am in recovery. It may be due to the post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, or even the anxiety that I live with that gives rise to such chest-pressing feelings. Imprisonment has been and continues to be the most challenging experience of my life. I’ve discovered that reading and writing help me to cope.

What I do know is that I am extremely grateful, for the numerous times that Spotlight on Recovery has validated my thoughts and feelings. By encouraging me to write, and by providing opportunities for my writings to be published in your magazine, you’ve provided a platform that acknowledges me. You remind me that my voice *does* matter and that my thoughts and feelings are valid. Our correspondence and the writings you inspire are comforting. Thank you for being in my corner as I battle through life’s issues. I’m grateful.

Heavy on my mind,

Kabasha

Spotlight On Recovery

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Contact R. Graham Publishing Company at rgraham_100@msn.com





How Spotlight on Recovery Impacted My Life: Pressure and Relief

By Franklin Junior

“I’ve managed to stop the bleeding, the explosive pipe that was destroying my life through the grace of Ms. Graham’s vision. To provide this platform, to let me use it therapeutically, that’s what it is to me, therapeutic. Releasing my thoughts like a 12-step format, to share with the world my true self, as I learn my true self at the same time you read it.” -Franklin Junior

I’m here to tell you pressure will bust a pipe! The pressure that was coming in my life was mostly from within. The rest was from life itself, at the time that I was introduced to Ms. Robin Graham and Spotlight on Recovery. Coincidences are rare almost, like a unicorn, it was meant to be because reading the stories of other people’s life joys, struggles, encouragement, blessings, losses, and redemption, I had a change in my attitude that some will say is 90% of our solution or our problems in life.

Through this new avenue in Spotlight, I was able to release that pressure, slowly through my pen. I’ve written zines, essays, short books, and poetry. However, when I send an article or something to Ms. Graham, it challenges me because I just can’t write with my mind closed in a box like my past lifestyles. I must open not just my mind but my heart, to look inside and extract the true me. The “Me,” that was camouflaged by images that only got me results that are more negative.

Negativity flows like water and steam when you’re not thinking correctly. I love my family, kids, girlfriend, and wife. I thought I truly loved myself, yet I was conditioned to think in a certain way. I lived the life of a family man before home, job/career. I had the look but I still had the thoughts, like a sealed pipe that water and steam were flowing in and building up.

With these movements, it was inevitable that I was going to erupt. I guess the Universe/God or what you want to say provided a way to drill a hole in the

pipe and slow down the flow of water/negativity.

Each time my name, followed by my heart, the me on those pages in Spotlight drills a hole in the pipe. When someone reads it and feels me, enjoy it and it helps them, helps someone or touches one, another hole is drilled within the pipe, a much-needed hole. Each time I open the magazine and read an article or poetry that’s from someone that touches me, it slows down that flow a little bit more.

Can you see where I’m going with this? The last 5 years of my life behind enemy lines, I’ve managed to stop the bleeding, the explosive pipe that was destroying my life through the grace of Ms. Graham’s vision. To take this platform, to let me use it therapeutically, that’s what it is to me, therapeutic. Releasing my thoughts like a 12-step format, to share with the world my true self, as I learn my true self at the same time you read it.

My life has been impacted by this ride in a lot of ways. It made me set aside entertainment and pick up attainment on the way to atonement. I wrote a book about the American Dream. I’ve introduced others to the Spotlight Magazine the way it has done for me. I’m returning and passing the blessing, hoping it will impact their life. The only way to feel the impact is to open your heart and mind. That’s the only way.

Therefore, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to Spotlight. You may have helped some and made a difference. *Keep it up!* A special thanks





to Ms. Graham for the opportunity. I love and respect what you do. Please don't stop. Continue to grow yourself so you can help me grow!

You have alleviated and released the pressure, so I could throw the pipe away myself. In my writing, I see the flaws in my life. The more I wrote for Spotlight, I found solutions for my life. Thank you.

Please, whoever reads this, don't take this or anyone for granted. Take advantage of life's lifejackets.

Franklin Junior,

Revolutionary Warrior, Free Thinker.

I serve those at the bottom to awaken the nuclear mind that's overlooked.

“I find Robin to be a truly genuine individual, a gifted writer, and an advocate for those who have experienced severe trauma and are on the margins of society. She puts her heart and soul into Spotlight on Recovery and is gaining momentum as she endeavors to expand her literary reach into schools, places of worship, and the prison system.” – Jerry Nehr Jr.

I met Robin Graham approximately 5 years ago. I sent her an article entitled “Dear Madam President” and she published it in her magazine, Spotlight on Recovery, the very next month. Since that time I have written numerous articles for her. Over the last couple months, we have spoken by phone and are collaborating on a project of which she will be unveiling in the weeks and months ahead.

I find Robin to be a truly genuine individual, a gifted writer, and an advocate for those who have experienced severe trauma and are on the margins of society. She puts her heart and soul into Spotlight on Recovery and is gaining momentum as she endeavors to expand her literary reach into schools, places of worship, and the prison system.

I am honored to be a contributing writer for Spotlight on Recovery. Robin Graham uses the platform of a magazine to address the important topics

in our society. Her courage as an editor and a writer is noteworthy. I believe that Robin has the capacity to grow the reach of Spotlight as she moves into other mediums of communication.

What started off as a newsletter for a Drug Counseling Program is now a magazine with the potential to influence many beyond its current subscription reach of New York, California, Connecticut, Florida, Texas, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

If you have not read Spotlight on Recovery, you need to contact Robin now and get on her list. She will not only get you started as a subscriber, but will also take the time to speak with you about her work and her mission.

Jerry M. Nehr, Jr.

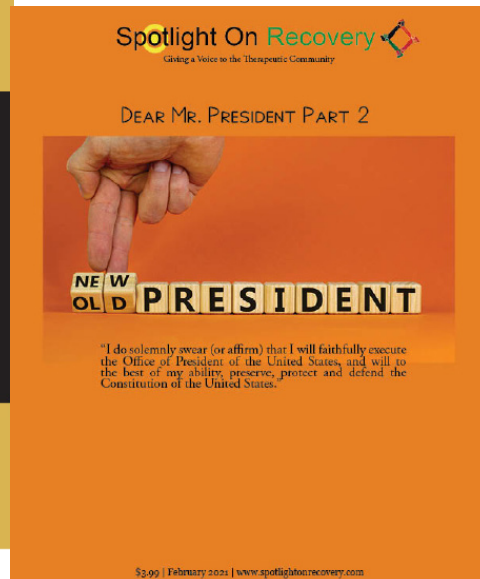
www.jerrynehr.com





Back Issues Available

To order a package of 12 or more magazines for your church, youth center, hospital or health facility, contact Ms. Robin Graham at rgraham_100@msn.com. Mix and match is available for bulk orders.



Coming in 2022

Spotlight On Recovery

Podcast





What Being a Writer in Spotlight on Recovery Magazine Means to Me

By Tom Kropp

I discovered Spotlight on Recovery magazine while I was in the hole of a maximum-security prison. I'd been in that same cell for over two years where I had almost no contact with anyone. Three times a day the guards would slide a tray through my door trap if I were awake and had my light on. If I was asleep or didn't have my light on, I wasn't fed. I was trapped in that cage constantly and the only times I could leave the cage was to shower twice a week or go to another larger cage where the law library was.

My only choice for recreation was the larger cage where I could walk around. There weren't any weights or exercise equipment offered. Anytime I left the cage, the guards cuffed my hands behind my back through the door trap. I could hear other prisoners screaming back and forth to each other between cells day and night.

I was lucky to have a TV to watch and a fan to combat the sweltering heat and mind-numbing boredom. The library was very limited and within a year, I'd read all the books that interested me. I was battling intense mental demons.

When my mom would come to visit, I would see her on a TV screen of another cage used for visits. I wasn't allowed any direct contact with my family. There were many days when I came quite close to suicide.

Going on my third year in the hole, I spotted a Spotlight on Recovery magazine that someone had left in the law library cell for others to read. I picked it up and was surprised to find contributing writers that were going through rough prison times like me. However, I also discovered writers that were free battling their own mental and emotional abuse demons. I found it helpful discovering others who could relate to my manic-depressive thoughts and lifestyle.

At the time, I wasn't even allowed a normal pen or pencil because they could be used as weapons. The prison only allowed bending pen inserts, which were very hard to use for writing. I was writing short stories with my pen insert and my mom was nice enough to type some of my stories and mail them to magazines. However, none of the magazines were interested in publishing my articles about depression and my convict lifestyle in prison.

After reading that Spotlight on Recovery issue, I began submitting articles to Spotlight and they were published. My first article was "Leaving the Streets Behind," published in 2018.

Becoming a contributor meant that I could write about the mental health issues and the screwed up lifestyle I'd had for other readers to see and relate to. I hope that my articles helped a few people who read my articles; just like reading some articles in Spotlight on Recovery helped me.

I think Spotlight on Recovery is a magazine that appeals to a wide range of people from all walks of society that battle their own mental health issues and it's a privilege being a contributing writer for such a fine magazine.





“Although, we stand separated by the law, and fences we are still one people bound together by humanity. Spotlight on Recovery gives all of us the message that we are in this life experience together and together we can overcome anything that comes our way.” - Dorothy Maraglino

Dear Robin,

I wanted to take a minute to share with you what your magazine and your work has meant to me. Spotlight on Recovery is a magazine that offers hope to both the writers and the readers. The pages hold pieces written by inmates and people of the free world. Together, we agree on the ability and power of recovery. Recovery might be from abuse, addiction, trauma, living situations, life challenges, or criminal influences.

The magazine opens with a letter from Ms. Robin that gives all the pieces that come after it, a sense of harmony. Within the pages of this magazine are articles that share how the world's concerns, are

experienced inside, and how the concerns inside here, are experienced outside.

Although, we stand separated by the law, and fences we are still one people bound together by humanity. Spotlight on Recovery gives all of us the message, that we are all in this life experience together, and together we can overcome anything that comes our way.

With my deepest gratitude for the work you do,

Dorothy Maraglino

*“Since I’ve become a part of this movement, I have overcome so many obstacles realizing that God gives His biggest tests to his toughest soldiers.”
- Mykel Eads*

Spotlight on Recovery has changed my life in so many ways it's hard to even explain. Being a part of Spotlight on Recovery is life changing. It has helped me become a better me, a better parent, friend, brother, and over all a better person.

Since I've become a part of this movement, I have overcome so many obstacles realizing that God gives His biggest tests to his toughest soldiers. First and foremost, all praise belongs to He who owns my soul.

Second, Ms. Graham has helped me in so many ways it's my prayer that God continues to reward her for her efforts in making the world a better place for giving those of us who society says are not worth it a voice and a reason to want to be a part of something so profound and everlasting. She openly

gives us a chance, for me it's my millionth chance. I must admit that although being in the Spotlight on Recovery Magazine hasn't been an easy road it has allowed me to fall up instead of down.

I want to thank you Ms. Graham and all the writers for Spotlight on Recovery Magazine for never giving up on me or yourselves. When life is unaccommodating and tougher than nails, I remember my purpose and realize it's not about me it's about those who need us. We are the voices of heroes for those who can't speak. We are the ones who stand in the gap for the oppressed.

Thank you so much Spotlight on Recovery, whatever you do never let your Light go out.

Mykell Eads





Spotlight On Recovery Helped Me Find The Outlet I Needed

By Dennis Mintun

In 2013, I was feeling pretty down. I've always loved to write, but being a prisoner gave me very few outlets for writing. Then, after a query letter, I was told they were looking for articles related to "Am I my Brother's Keeper?"

After my friend was killed, I looked for a way to express my feelings about my loss. Therefore, I wrote an article titled, "Keeping the Pigeons from the Hawks." At the time, I used a pen name ("Cougar Newquist"), for fear some inmate would recognize my name and give me a hard time.

Ms. Robin Graham wrote to me to tell me that she was accepting my article for her publication. Although I had written many things over the years, this was the first time I ever got paid for my writing. I was now a "professional" writer.

That experience gave me the motivation to look for other outlets for my writing. Since then, I've been published in quite a few places. However, I'm always proud to tell people that I am a "regular contributor" to Spotlight on Recovery Magazine.

In addition, it has not just been an outlet for writing. The magazine has become a valuable teaching tool. I run a religious group here at the Idaho prison, and frequently will use one or more of the articles to help others. In addition, Spotlight on Recovery Magazine has greatly helped me with my personal recovery issues.

Thank you, Spotlight on Recovery, R. Graham Publishing Company, and Ms. Robin Graham for a wonderful publication. Here's to 20 more years!

-Dennis Mintun (aka Cougar Newquist)

Spotlight on Recovery helps me mentally, and emotionally, as I write about the topics expressing the (Real Facts of Life).

Ms. Graham,

First, I want to thank you for letting me be a writer for Spotlight on Recovery.

Spotlight on Recovery magazine helps me with my vocabulary, spelling, and brings strength to my mind. Being a contributing writer helps me in so many ways enduring this time. Spotlight on Recovery helps me mentally, and emotionally, as I write about the topics expressing the (Real Facts of Life).

I think that would be a good topic, (The Real Facts of Life).

Thanks - - much love to you sister.

Corey Williams





Anniversary Blessings

By Efrain Morales, Jr.

Blessings. What are they?

Blessings are in the making—to me, at least.

Generation upon generation many hold to a sort of heavenly interpretation of where blessings originate. Some place faith in a higher source and solidify that faith through praise and worship. Others think it mere happenstance, without the possibility of divine intervention: pragmatists. Yet, others render visceral reaction to the mere notion of an invisible entity. Then there are those that view it as I do, that “Blessings are in the making.”

To elaborate: Perspective is a unique and individual faculty that affords for the appreciation of even the simplest of nuances or happenings trivial to some. Take for instance, a stranger paying for your meal in a restaurant, stopping to offer roadside assistance, being considerate in surrendering your place in a store line when noticing the person behind you has only one item, etc., etc.

What are you getting at? You might wonder.

Take the last example--above, and visualize a person sighing in exasperation as he contemplates the long wait before paying for the one item. Now visualize the person in front of him now taking notice of the one item and realizing that it would be a quick check out and so no big deal to allow that person to cut in line. My point being that it was a “blessing in the making,” howbeit inadvertently.

We also have the “reap what you sow” natural byproduct sometimes referred to as Karma, precipitated from either benign or malign motives. The proverb “you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar” can illustrate this point in merely being polite than hostile or demanding.

I can't speak for anyone else, but I can say that many a movement has reaped the benefits from sometimes even an unsung hero standing up for the

rights of a marginalized or minority group: (Gay Rights Movement, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation followed by Martin Luther King Jr.s' call for equality, etc.).

My personal experience has been in the gestation of unforeseeable blessings from altruistic efforts. To elaborate, as a kid I longed to become a published writer someday. However, it was far more than that. It was sort of an innate yearning to share with others the pangs in life so that others can better cope and recover. This I achieved through, firstly Ozark's Senior Living newspaper; then Spotlight on Recovery magazine. It was a need to help people better understand what is different (the disorder-stricken, the challenged, the modern-day lepers that are shunned merely because of a past crime, skin color, religion, sex preference, or even choice dress wear). In this way, help them feel empathy and become more humane toward our fellow citizenry—equals good Karma ...in the making.

Sadly though, in this fast-paced era where everything is made easier than good old fashion reading, many don't recover as fast—if ever—as they should (<https://www.crossway.org>; Why Reading is a Lost art).

I came to a place in life where I was down and out and asked myself, what qualifies another day of this dreary and drab existence? Then, after many tears, it dawned on me that the inward me had never changed at all. I still had those childhood yearnings to enlighten folks, and like a phoenix being reborn from a torrent of ashes the writer in me came to life through beautiful words, and my solace I found via Spotlight on Recovery Magazine.

Happy Anniversary Spotlight on Recovery!





“Pens up, friends - - Every issue of Spotlight bears testimony yet again that stories heal. Reading them and writing them.” – Amy Nicholson

It has been an honor for me to be a part of Spotlight on Recovery since 2019. I am humbled when I read contributions from and biographies of other writers. Their vulnerability in sharing the painful experiences in their lives leaves me appreciating their courage, to not only endure such trauma but to then, in turn, take those painful experiences and share them with others through their writing. This is how we connect with each other. This is how we remind each other that we are not alone. A message that is vitally important now more than ever.

I have not always been as quick to relate my own personal stories of tragedy and trauma in my life. Perhaps pride has gotten in the way. Perhaps fear of judgment.

However, we must tell our stories, right? If our own hearts are to heal, if we are to, as Paul encourages us in his letter, to “bear one another’s burdens,” (Galatians 6:2), we must tell our stories. Pens up, friends - - Every issue of Spotlight bears testimony yet again that stories heal. Reading them and writing them.

Congratulations, Robin Graham and everyone who shares their stories, on leaving this wonderful legacy in print.

Here’s to many more!

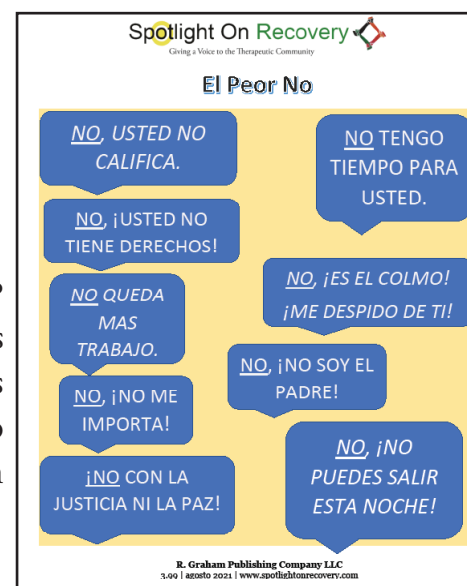
Amy Nicholson

SPOTLIGHT ON RECOVERY NEWS

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month and our 20th Anniversary, Spotlight on Recovery magazine has launched its first Spanish issues. You can now purchase the June 2021 and August 2021 issues in Spanish at the same price. Next year, all 2022 releases will have a translated version. What a celebration!

NOTICIAS DE LA REVISTA “SPOTLIGHT ON RECOVERY”

En honor del Mes de la Herencia Hispana y nuestro 20º aniversario, la revista Spotlight on Recovery ha lanzado sus primeras ediciones en español. Ahora se puede comprar las ediciones de junio y de agosto de 2021 en español al mismo precio. El año que viene 2022, todas las ediciones tendrán una versión traducida al español. ¡Qué celebración!





“It’s truly a blessing and I keep re-thanking myself for ordering a subscription to your Spotlight on Recovery magazine which is always full of knowledge, wisdom, understanding, intelligence, and even more so, full of mental, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual soul food.” -Rickie Randle

Genuine Greetings,

I wish you the best of success. Although you are not a doctor by the world definition and standards, you have a Doctorate degree that cannot be bought, or earned from the best universities, colleges and institutions this world has to offer. You feed my mind with your commitment and unselfish contributions to society and civilization in general.

I know I have been out of touch for some time, but I lost my Dad last August 2020 and my sister in May of this year. In spite of all I’ve been through in the past year (having Co-vid last year), I’m always inspired and motivated to keep pushing and pulling every time I receive your Spotlight on Recovery magazine. Your work is food to my soul, and it has an unexplainable way of nagging at my self-accusing spirit. Just when I start feeling like the one dealt a bad hand, and I can’t win for losing, I get your magazine and get countless reminders of how fortunate and blessed I am. It’s truly a blessing and I keep re-thanking myself for ordering a subscription to your Spotlight on Recovery magazine which is always full of knowledge, wisdom, understanding, intelligence, and even more so, full of

mental, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual soul food.

I’m always exerting myself to feed others and I’ve never realized how depleted I was from pouring out but never having anyone to feed and pour into me. I am thankful to you for using your talents and gifts to produce a contribution that has a meaning and purpose that cultivates the mind of both reader and writer. By facing, embracing, and accepting our shortcomings, struggles, troubles, mistakes, faults, etc., by sharing our pain and truths, scars and wounds, this is an act of moral, mental, physical, and even spiritual purification.

Thanks to you and your magazines, I feel refueled and restored in a way that I can’t express with nouns and verbs. To you, I dedicate my deepest gratitude. I’m truly honored and grateful to be a witness, even testimonial to your worth, value and help assist you in building an unbreakable legacy as a prototype of the strength and sacredness not just as a Black woman, but as a Mother of Civilization.

Cordially,
Rickie Randle





Spotlight On Recovery: Where We Share Our Struggles

By Glenn Slaby

Congratulations!! Happy 20th Anniversary!

“Writing is medicine. It’s an appropriate antidote to injury. It is an appropriate companion to any difficult change.” – Julia Cameron, Author of *The Artist’s Way*

Writing about one’s mental health struggles is therapeutic, leading the self to a clearer understanding of their individual battles. Writing clears the mind and soul. It is a form of healing. Spotlight on Recovery presented me with this opportunity. This magazine was the first solely dedicated to mental health issues, who published by essays, and the one only listed in The Writer’s Guidelines annual editions for those suffering from mental illness.

Co-workers and peers enjoyed the quality of my prose (as well as other Spotlight articles), leading to a greater understanding of my issues, clarifying, recognizing another’s struggles, some success and those of others. They could, I could see part of myself in all the published articles.

Being published, having your own by-line and paid by a quality magazine creates immense self-satisfaction, produces a sense of purpose and generates

confidence for further success in writing or other endeavors. It builds confidence.

Mental illness travels along the paths of many lives. Knowing others, understanding and learning another’s struggle, how they survive, live, contribute with mental illness was conveyed through Spotlight on Recovery. I saw my own inner pain through the eyes of others’ writings. I was not alone.

Those other stories, these lives, no two had the same experiences, yet we are all united in our struggles. I have learned, through Spotlight on Recovery, other’s successful reconciliations with the many variable and distinct illnesses under the frame of mental health issues, learning I am not alone in failures, tears, sadness, and achievements.

Seeing the healed scars of others makes us more comfortable with our own.

“I can shake off everything as I write: My sorrows disappear, courage is reborn.” – Anne Frank

Glenn Slaby





“Always remember, that recovery is universal, and many are seeking answers to overcome their frustrations, hardships, heartaches, and headaches. Ms. Robin prays that Spotlight can be a resource for anyone who is suffering, to find some of the answers in our pages.” – Anthony Tate

Hello Readers,

I pray that all is well with you and yours, and I want to thank you all for continuing to read Spotlight on Recovery magazine.

A quick reminder to all: Wash your hands and wear your mask, because, things are still not over with Covid-19.

Happy Anniversary To Spotlight on Recovery Magazine - - on twenty years of faithful service. Thank you, Ms. Robin and thank you readers, because without you, there would be no Spotlight on Recovery magazine and I know that Ms. Robin feels the same way.

I want to share with you all about why I am grateful for Ms. Robin Graham and Spotlight on Recovery magazine. Spotlight on Recovery has given me a way to express my thoughts and feelings, and to help you all in the process, nothing feels more “special” to a writer, than the thought that his/her words are helping someone else; saving someone else’s life or making someone else re-think a situation. This makes it all worthwhile.

Spotlight on Recovery has given me that opportunity, and in the process of helping you, I am helping myself and nothing could be more “special” to me. We all go through obstacles in life, but the “Spotlight” is not on the obstacles that we go through in life. It is on the way that we handle and overcome them, that’s the difference!

One of my most potent weapons is (positive thinking). I have learned that no matter how bad the situation may seem, it’s always some light in it. It’s up to me to find it and (positive thinking) is the key to accomplishing that because there is no other way that

I could survive twenty-one years behind these prison walls without at some point teaching myself to (think positive). You see readers, I’m no different from the last person.

Thank God! Thank my family! Thank you all, and, thank Ms. Robin and Spotlight on Recovery, and thank myself. These important factors made a difference in my life, and they kept me “positive” through everything that I was, and I am still going through. I don’t care what it is that you must grab a hold of to stay afloat, but I do want you to hold on tight until help comes. “Stay afloat,” and always remember that no matter what you may be going through it’s not as bad as it may seem. You may be like me. I always think that every situation that I find myself in is the end of the word (Lol), but it’s hardly that. I clearly understand that negative thinking comes from my old lifestyle, and I want you all to do the same. Recognize it and turn it to positive thinking and watch how your world changes.

Always remember, that recovery is universal, and many are seeking answers to overcome their frustrations, hardships, heartaches, and headaches. Ms. Robin prays that Spotlight can be a resource for anyone who is suffering, to find some of the answers in our pages.

Thank you, readers, and thank you Spotlight!

Happy 20th Anniversary -- and many, many more.

Most humble,

Anthony Tate





Why I Love Spotlight on Recovery Magazine

David Lee Tidwell

The road to recovery has many levels, many steps, bumps, breaks, and yes, even failures. We learn from the start, stand tall, and keep stepping.

My life has never been what I'd call easy, and my hardships, well, I caused them. I've made many mistakes in life, yet through these failures, I've also learned what not to do, how not to act. These hard-learned lessons have given me, now at 48 years old, an insight into steps one can take to not follow my wrong roads travelled.

And yet -- I still fall short on many other things. This magazine, reading it, writing for it, gives me perspective and a purpose. My family, ex-wife, daughters, and my son are sent copies by Ms. Graham, and Lord knows they too could use the help this magazine offers. Everyone can. Even if I never made another dime doing this, I'd still write for this magazine. Some things have a higher purpose.

Helping others is well worth the little time it takes me to put pen to paper, and I hope helps, and gives perspective to others.

Twenty years! Wow Ms. Graham, in my mind you are a Saint. You can always count on my input, if the articles make the magazine or not. Thank you for allowing me to help, and learn from this wonderful magazine.

David Lee Tidwell

This issue of Spotlight on Recovery has been designed by:





“We know that mental health must be a focal point to continue to heal our community from the repercussions of trauma in all its forms. But more importantly to create change for a better future, as we evolve, and continue to give a voice to all.” -Rev. lisa roma w.

Congratulations to Robin Graham, publisher of Spotlight On Recovery magazine, on reaching the first twenty-year milestone!

What a journey it has been, and continues to be, for everyone. We look forward to the next 20 years, and so forth.

I am grateful to have been a previous contributing writer for Spotlight, as well as having lent my editing services, graphic and publication design to Spotlight when the issue was booklet size. And I remember when Robin put together the Spotlight Film Festival in Brooklyn. As a subscriber, I have recommended the magazine to family and friends, for some who write and all to read. I continue to support and believe in the endeavors of this strong visionary woman, a true angel for the therapeutic community and role model for society at large.

Robin demonstrates how we as an extended and diverse community can value and encourage each other

thru the platform of writing and beyond. We know that mental health must be a focal point to continue to heal our community from the repercussions of trauma in all its forms. But more importantly to create change for a better future, as we strive to evolve, and continue to give a voice to all.

I heartily applaud the work and efforts of Robin Graham for Spotlight on Recovery magazine and I am proud to call her my friend.

Again, I give a toast to another twenty years and beyond. Long live Spotlight and all its future manifestations.

Thank you, Robin, and your team, for all you do. ONE LOVE!

Rev. lisa roma w.





Why I am grateful for Spotlight on Recovery

For many years, I have wanted to be a freelance writer. I bought a book that listed magazines and books that take submissions and found Spotlight on Recovery.

I e-mailed the Editor asking if I could write for the magazine suggesting topics that I could do. It wasn't an immediate yes that I received when inquiring about writing for the magazine. I proposed writing about other people's clean time, but that wasn't what was wanted. When I finally got a chance to write, it was my recovery that I was asked to write about.

My first article was titled "Bumpy Road to Recovery" since it was not an easy journey for me. The article appeared in the Winter, 2017 issue of Spotlight on Recovery, (Rock Bottom, Part 2). I have heard "You

reach bottom when you stop digging" and I am putting down the shovel.

I have not maintained long-term sobriety, but I am still working on it. I am grateful for the opportunity to write for Spotlight on Recovery, because it is motivation to keep working on recovery. I have often gotten discouraged due to lack of support from some people, but I am not going to let that stop me. I am grateful to be sober today, because I know that things could be much worse. I went down the rabbit hole, and the outcome was treacherous. I don't want to see how low I can go, so I let go of the shovel and grabbed onto the hands that are helping me out.

Mary Wiede





Blast From The Past!!

Letter from the Publisher –Winter, 2017 Issue – Rock Bottom, Part 2

Hello Friends,

Do you feel like you are on the bottom, looking up? Climbing steps every day trying to get your foot up in life but you're too far down? Well, you may be down, but you're not out. If you just hold on and believe in your self-worth, you can pull yourself up.

Use one hand and reach out, pull yourself together one-step at a time. You may find another hand reaching out to help pull you up. I hope you realize that Spotlight on Recovery Magazine is the hand reaching out to help you when you're down.

I, too, am clutching a hand, here and there trying to move up further. It takes time and commitment, but it's not impossible.

Don't wait, start today. Stand up and reach out your hand. Don't be afraid to take someone's hand and help them move forward with you.

God Bless You.

Sincerely,

Robin Graham
Robin Graham
Founder/Publisher





A 20th Anniversary Celebration of a Fruitful Future

Living in a Correctional Facility, which is everything but “corrective,” becomes emotionally and psychologically debilitating over time.

This is especially true for those of us who have consciously embraced change, but are still forced to thrive in fruitless environments surrounded by so many others who haven’t chosen the path to self-reformation and transformation yet.

Being a writer for Robin Graham and her Spotlight on Recovery magazine has been a Saving Grace. It provides a platform for myself and I assume many others as well, who’ve internalized and strive to embody the spiritual principle. “We can only keep what we have by giving it away.”

Spotlight on Recovery, allows us to share out stories. It’s a highly therapeutic experience and outlet for self-expression. It is cathartic as a form of restitution for any unpaid debts potentially unbalancing our karmic register.

It has also been very challenging as well. It forces me to dig deeper and write about topics I probably would’ve never considered, but that I need to devote more thought and attention toward in order to receive the benefits such topics contain. Robin pushes me to polish my writing with helpful and constructive criticism.

It’s also awe-inspiring to see how much work Spotlight on Recovery puts into amplifying our voices so they can be heard, and hopefully humanize ourselves in the process. Wondering whether or not people on the outside have forgotten about us and what we really go through often generates feelings of loneliness and hopelessness. The disparaging nature of life inside the institution breeds widespread helplessness, frustration, and periodic bouts with depression and feelings of worthlessness. So, there are no appropriate words qualified for expressing the magnitude in our corner like Robin Graham, who constructs, organizes, and

maintains a bridge of communication between us on the inside, and those on the inside.

Spotlight on Recovery proves there are too many valuable men behind bars who could be assets to our communities if given the proper treatment, and chance to prove our worth.

So, I’m honored to be writing for Robin Graham, and Spotlight on Recovery. It keeps me grounded, motivated, and hopeful about endless possibilities for change.

Writing is a passion of mine, and I hope anyone who reads my work can feel it radiating through my words.

This has been an unforgettable experience. One that I hope will propel Robin, and all other writers for Spotlight on Recovery onto bigger, and better things.

So, Happy 20th Anniversary, to Robin Graham, and Spotlight on Recovery!!!

May it continue to touch, and transform the lives of the still sick, and suffering, and those who read the stories written by so many of us still struggling to recover from the pain, and devastation addiction inflicts upon all of humanity every second of our lives. Spotlight on Recovery brings all of us together on the pages of its magazine and is worthy of all the support and praise it receives!

Thank you.

Jeffrey Wright





About the Authors

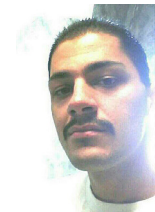
Anthony Billings About the author: About the author: Anthony Billings was raised in a small town called Susanville, California. He has an A.S. Degree in General Business and an A.A. Degree in Social/Behavioral Sciences. He earned both through Coastline Community College. In 2017, he was one of only 51 incarcerated individuals awarded the ASG Merit Scholarship.

He has been involved in creative writing for over 15 years now and has over 30 published pieces to his credit, including some that have gotten top placement in poetry or essay competitions. Using creative writing as an outlet has not just led to achievement, but has also given him a purpose. He has motivated others to pick up writing, he has used his voice to give a voice to the voiceless, and he has changed the perceptions of others by inspiring those that have read and found meaning in his words.

Anthony has discovered a craft that has proven to be positive, productive, and life changing. His writing career has only just begun and he can't wait to see where it takes him next.

If you would like to contact this writer you can reach him by writing to the below address:

Anthony Billings #G -50184
Pleasant Valley State Prison
B-1 #104
P.O. Box 8500
Coalinga, CA 93210



Arcane Element About the author: Arcane Element is a visionary who aspires to bring people together under a banner of harmony and advancement. He loves to write, and has written poetry, music, and articles for most of his life. He hopes to help inspire people who will spark the revolution for change.

Currently a hostage in the Arkansas Department of Corrections, he is working towards receiving a reduction of sentence so he may have a second chance at life. All interested parties may contact him at:

Arcane Element #142660
P.O. Box 600
Grady, Ark 71644

ArcaneElement@gmail.com

Please limit any letters to 2 pages or e-mail him.

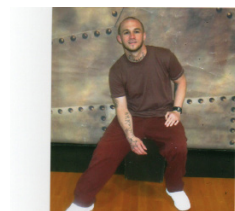


Lydia Ferguson About the author: Lydia Ferguson is a subscriber and longtime family friend.

Nathan Gilbert About the author: My name is Nathan Gilbert, I am 29 years old, I was raised in a small town called Biglerville, PA, right outside of Gettysburg, by a single mother who battled her demons.

I didn't have the best of role models, the first time I was drunk, I was nine years old. I fell into a bad crowd. Fighting drugs and alcohol, I kept trying to do right however, life had other plans for me. Although I received probation at the age of 15, I did manage to graduate from high school. I also completed a culinary course so I can cook a little bit.

I got caught up in the crime and drug life at 19 and went to jail. I did my best to change and kept hitting obstacles. I didn't know how to cope positively. I wanted some stupid "street cred." It took me 5 years ago to really open my





eyes up and realize my potential. I finally believe in myself, too old for the nonsense, you know?

Troy Glover About the author: Troy Glover dabbles in everything. He is a composer of song lyrics, poetry, and Greeting Card slogans. He writes Sci /Fi, fiction, and non-fiction. Troy Glover may not be an artist yet, but he publishes artwork as well. He has an Associate's Degree from Lee College and he's working towards his Bachelors in Theology. He is a humorous Zen Buddhist trying to figure out the sound of one wing flapping.

If you would like to write to Troy Glover, he can be reached at:

Troy Glover #932481
Darrington Unit
59 Darrington Road
Rosharon, Texas 77583

If you would like to view Troy's artwork, go to:
roninsworld@prisonartware.com

Ana Gonzalez Ribeiro About the Author: Ana Gonzalez Ribeiro, MBA, AFC® is an Accredited Financial Counselor® founder of Rise Up Financial Coaching, a fee only financial counseling firm. She is also a Bilingual Personal Finance Writer and Educator dedicated to helping populations that need financial literacy and counseling. Her informative articles have been published in various news outlets and websites including Huffington Post, Fidelity, Fox Business News, MSN and Yahoo Finance. She's been featured on WIBC Indy's News 93.1 FM radio, Blog Talk Radio, Radio Campesina 101.9 and interviewed on Channel 41's Univision morning news program, "Al Despertar". She also founded the personal financial and motivational site www.Ace the Journey.com and translated into Spanish the book, Financial Advice for Blue Collar America by Kathryn B. Hauer, CFP. Ana teaches Spanish or English personal finance courses on behalf of the WISE (Working In Support of Education) program and has taught workshops for non-profits in NYC and Westchester including Institute for Financial Literacy and KRVC (Building a Better Community 1 Block at a Time!) She also provides financial counseling to the military through Zeiders, a company that provides human services solutions to support Military and Veteran communities.



Kabasha Griffin-El About the Author: Kabasha Griffin-El is a former U.S. Marine living with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Depression, and Anxiety. For the past twenty five years he's been in prison, fighting a life sentence. His personal recovery journey has enabled him to aid others in his capacities of Certified Peer Specialist (CPS), Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Facilitator, Certified Tutor, and as Founder of the Unit Literacy Group (ULG). He maintains hope of regaining his freedom to continue his present work. Kabasha welcomes your supporting letters.



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Franklin Junior About the Author: I am a revolutionary warrior who writes with my all. A free-thinker screaming loud from a cell. I strive to make Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Frederick Douglas, Marcus Garvey, and Stokely Carmichael proud. As these men have endured the atrocities in their time and strived to do





something about it, I am one of them. I want to make that positive, much needed difference.

Tom Kropp About the Author: Tom Kropp is a sensei in Kenpo Karate that has won numerous tournament awards. His work has appeared in Muscle and Fitness, Woodworker's Journal, Outdoor Life, Nut House, J Journal and Conceit and Chiron magazine.



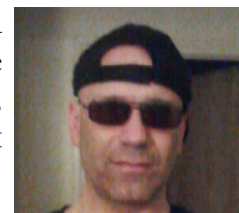
Dorothy Maraglino

About the Author: Dorothy Maraglino is serving a life without parole sentence for felony murder and is being held at the Central California Women's Facility. She has been writing for most of her life as a way to document, process, record, and deal with life's challenges. Dorothy grew up overseas. As a foreigner in a new country, she had many experiences that influenced her personality and writing. When she returned to America, she went to boarding school and again used writing to cope with the strict judgmental world around her. She was introduced to BDSM (Bondage Domination Sadomasochism), just after high school. She was passed from first Master to the next and finally her third who killed a young woman he was trying to introduce to BDSM in 2012. The fact that Dorothy had communicated with both her Master and the victim before the crime, meant that she was liable for murder and was named a conspirator. Under the old law, the penalty held a sentence of life without parole.

Writing remains Dorothy's main outlet to deal with the world around her. She published a novel titled "Grace in Captivity," combining parts of her BDSM and prison life into a fictional story with non-fictional elements thrown in. She awaits the new laws that have passed since her conviction, which say she is not guilty of murder, to reach her petition in court. She regularly writes articles about prison life that she has published along with her other works. She is currently working on completing additional books for publication including a sequel to her novel.

Dennis Mintun About the Author: Dennis Mintun has been a regular contributor to Spotlight on Recovery Magazine since 2013, under the pen name of "Cougar Newquist." Because he uses the mistakes of his own past to help others overcome theirs – everyone knows who "Cougar" is. Dennis runs a thriving chapel group that focuses on personal empowerment. He has written articles, stories, and poems for various magazines, and has fiction and non-fiction books at PrisonsFoundation.org

Efrain Morales, Jr. About the Author: Efrain Morales, Jr., who has published abroad in newspapers, newsletters and magazines, including Spotlight, is also a Certified Braille Transcriber. He is the author of "Mis-understood and Mis-diagnosed: Living with a Disorder, and Am I Really a Monster?" He is currently finalizing a Fantasy Fiction book, titled "Leena & the Keeper of Magics."



Jerry Nehr About the Author: Jerry Nehr, is a writer, speaker, teacher and addiction's therapist, Jerry's work is aimed at helping individuals live genuinely, with hope and in service to others. His down to Earth, practical speaking style has brought him into boardrooms, classrooms, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and places of worship, to name a few.

Jerry is continually encouraging his audiences and readers to overcome their fears, let go of past hurts, trust in themselves and their own inner voice, have gratitude and dream!

Additionally, he designs and facilitates training programs in the following areas: Servant Leadership, Cultural Diversity, Addiction and Self-Destructive Behaviors, Anger Management and Self-Esteem.

Jerry holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Wayne State University and a





master's degree in Counseling and Addiction Studies from the University of Detroit Mercy.

For more information, you can visit his website at: www.jerrynehr.com

Amy Nicholson About the author: Amy Nicholson hopes to encourage and inspire others through her writing. She has been published in Country Woman, The Old Schoolhouse, The Lookout, and other publications. When she's not writing, gardening, or hanging out with her family, Amy substitute teaches. Read a sampling of her musings at www.amynicholson14.wordpress.com.



Rickie Randle About the author: My name is Rickie Antonio Randle, I was born December 13, 1978 in Little Rock, Arkansas, raised by a single parent, who is an amazing wonder woman in the way she reared my younger brother, sister, and me.

As a child, I was very gifted and talented beyond my years and peers. By the time I was a teenager, I abused and misused these gifts and talents so much so, I began using and experimenting with drugs and alcohol, and starting a street gang which ultimately lead to my imprisonment.

Three days after my 18th birthday, I was sentenced to 100 years in prison for four counts aggravated robbery and one count of first-degree murder. I committed the robberies but I am 100 percent innocent of murder. I've been in prison 25 years and have been denied parole 4 times since 2016. Over the years, I've founded two youth programs: 1. "A Reason to Believe." and 2. C.I.T.Y. (Convicts Intervention Towards Youth), both of which are incorporated into my mother's non-profit organization, "Voices Unheard Ministries."

During my incarceration, I've grown, changed and learned a lot about the true facts of life. Unlike many fellas who came to prison seeking to learn of a right way to do something wrong or a smart way to do something stupid upon release, I've invested my time (most anyway) into discovering an intelligent way to do something excellent and an excellent way to do something brilliant.

I am a teacher, tutor, and mentor to others in prison and abroad and committed to using God's gifts of knowledge, wisdom, and intellectual and spiritual compass to guide the youth of our future to success.

Glenn Slaby About the author: Glenn Slaby, originally from Brooklyn, is married and has one son. A former accountant with an MBA, Glenn suffers from mental illness. He writes and works part-time at St. Vincent's Hospital in Harrison where he also receives therapy. He is the author of 90 plus published articles and letters. He is currently working on an MFA and is a Eucharistic Minister.



lisa roma About the author: lisa roma is a multi-creative woman, mother, artist, educator, interfaith minister and caregiver; she is a published writer, poet, editor, photographer, visual artist, vocalist, songwriter, guitarist, and book designer. She has taught in public school and after-school programs, recorded original songs on CD, and performed with various local New York based artists over the years. She is currently working on several literary and musical projects of her own creation and in collaboration.



She is founder-director of Creative Women's Network, a multi-creative publishing cooperative dedicated to healing, education and the Arts, and community building; and The Half Moon Theatre Company. Find out more. Www.creativewomensnetwork.com; Www.myspace.com/electrikgoddess; Www.soundcloud.com/electrikgoddess lisaroma ; CreativWomenNtwk@aol.





com (Message me).

lisa roma has been a contributing writer, editor, layout and cover artist for Robin Graham's SPOTLIGHT ON RECOVERY MAGAZINE, over the years, including the September 2005 First Annual Film Festival Event Issue.

Anthony Tate About the author: About the Author: Anthony began writing for Spotlight on Recovery last year. We are excited to have this new talent amongst our team of writers. Anthony says, "I'm from a place called Hope, and I would like to hear from you. I am a very humble man."

To correspond with Anthony Tate, write to:

Anthony Tate #098521
East Ark Region Unit
P.O. Box 180
Brickeys, Ark 72320



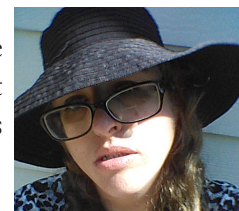
Anthony also says to his Mama, Donnie, Adrian, and Jewel, thank you for the support.

Dave Lee Tidwell About the author: My name is David Lee Tidwell. I am a prisoner in the Arkansas Department of Corrections. I have five kids, four girls, one boy, and six grandkids. I'm 47 years old. In the free world, I owned my own business for 20 years. I am also a singer and songwriter as I was in a band for 17 years.

To correspond with me, write to: David Lee Tidwell, ADC#141699

Varner Super Max – CB 3-01
P.O. Box 400
Grady, AR 71644

Mary Wiede About the author: Through the trenches of addiction, a creative soul finds purpose in recovery. Mary Wiede has contributed as a freelance writer in Spotlight on Recovery magazine. Her interests include art, reading, music, and spirituality. Her goals include entrepreneurship and feeding the creativity in her mind.



Corey Williams About the author: My name is Corey Williams, Jr. I go by the name Lil Corey. I am 23 years old. As a member of the Black Disciple Nation, I'm focused on (Unity), wanting to bring everyone together as one united. All Races from the streets to prison. I try to guide all people that have been misled growing up, mostly the youth who are growing up like I did and show them it's a way out and this is not it. I encourage everyone to stand as one. One big leadership! Plenty much love to you all!



Jeffrey Wright About the author: I have recently become a very proud member of the Spotlight on Recovery writing team, and spent a great deal of my time contemplating and writing about ways to help ex-offenders successfully re-integrate themselves back into society.



As a repeat offender, who is currently serving 25 years for first-degree bank robbery, I strive to play an active role in drawing more attention to the psychosocial factors contributing to the problem of mass incarceration. I believe prisons should be more clinical and far less penal in nature. This change ensure that young boys and girls who enter the system can be properly diagnosed, and never become repeat offenders who forfeit the majority of their adult lives, going in and out of prison.





To My Team:

Thank you all for being a part of this project over the years.

To my team of graphic artists who worked with me over the years, Mr. Khevyn Xacau, worked on my first issues of Spotlight on Recovery magazine, when they were the size of a Readers Digest. Khevyn designed my logo, and he was also a contributing writer.

The late Ms. Gail Lewis, Ms. Melissa Lauridin, who was also a contributing writer and Rev. Lisa Roma W., who has also been a contributing writer and assistant editor.

Ms. Tzippy G. joined the magazine in 2016 as my graphic designer. Her amazing work for the last 6 years has not gone unnoticed.

To my writers: Your words have given hope and comfort to people you may never meet. I am proud of all of you for sharing your courage, intelligence, prayers, empathy, and support with the Spotlight on Recovery community.

A Special Thank you to Ms. Sarah Simon who joined the company this year, as our magazine translator. Spotlight on Recovery is now available in Spanish.

To My Printing Companies: Mint Print, Polanko, The Copy Room, and for the past dozen years, Flatbush Copy Center.

Without your support, Spotlight on Recovery magazine could not have evolved.

To my sons, Paul, Trevor, Kevin, and Adam, who were ages 21, 11 1/2, 9 and 6 years old when I first started publishing Spotlight on Recovery Magazine.





Thank you, my sons for being an inspiration for some of my topics. Additional thanks to Trevor, Kevin, and Adam, for giving me quiet time while I was working on the magazine late at night after working two jobs.

To my friends: Ms. Vicki Becker and Ms. Ellen Hill.

Ms. Vicki Becker, who I met about 15 years ago. Thank you for your encouragement and support. You are the best.

Ms. Ellen Hill, who I have known since kindergarten, thank you for always being close to me, even when we don't speak as often as we would like.

Knowing you ladies is a blessing. Friendships that last a lifetime are very special and you both are very special people.

To my siblings: Joe, Kenny, Dennis, Phyllis, Darlene, Harry, Paula and Pamela, Mom and Dad gave us our life, each of you have used your gift wisely. It gives me joy to see how each of you help others. As you can see over the past 20 years, I've been bitten by that same spirit. The spirit to help others just because we can.

To my Heavenly Father:

Thank you, Lord, for all the blessings you gave me. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for showing me to my purpose. Thank you for Spotlight on Recovery.

For writers interested in submitting articles to Spotlight on Recovery, send a letter to R. Graham Publishing Company LLC, 9602 Glenwood Road, #140, Brooklyn, New York 11236 to receive a list of upcoming topics for 2022. Contributing writers will automatically receive the topic list the end of this month.





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