

Changing the world, one story at a time: Praise for The Voices and Faces Project's award-winning testimonial writing program

"What The Voices and Faces Project's *Writing a New Refugee Story* two-day writing workshop did for our community of refugee girls was different than anything anyone had ever done for us. It helped awaken our inner confidence and develop the skills we need to write our stories. It helped us become women of strength, power and kindness. During the workshop, hearing words and poems and the magnificent roar of others who had survived violence was uplifting. No longer would we stand by and let what we had experienced define and limit who we are! The Voices and Faces Project united us as survivors, and provided a platform we refugee girls could use for change. Together we unearthed the bright light that the darkness of trauma had buried in our hearts."



Chantale Zuzi, Student at Wesleyan University and recipient of the Meridith D. Wesby Young Leader Award.



Jennifer Huang, Director and Producer, *The Long Rescue*

"Through The Voices and Faces Project's testimonial writing workshop for survivors of gender-based violence my capacity, and the way I operate in the world, was suddenly opened to a new realm of possibility. As a documentary filmmaker, I have taken on the role of telling other people's stories, but I had not given consideration to my own, or even acknowledged that it might have value. During this workshop we discussed the challenging, beautiful work of Primo Levi, MLK, Dorothy Allison, and others. We wrote in sprints. And guiding us through this work, Anne and Clifton, who co-led the workshop, were attentive in a way I truly did not think was possible. I was asked to reflect on my experiences, and consider what I might have to offer through my own story. Seeing how thoughtfully these two absorbed our writing, how thoroughly and completely they were giving themselves to the process, made me realize how much farther I can go myself. Their listening made us all feel deeply cared for. I thought I was a good listener, but I realize now that I've been hanging out in the lobby. Anne and Clifton have shown me there are many more floors in the skyscraper."





Clare Gagne, Graduate of The Stories We Tell-
NYC

"The Voices and Faces Project's testimonial writing workshop for survivors of gender-based violence was the first time I believed I was not alone and that my story had value. There are no words that can justly describe the incredible experience I had with this two day writing program when it came to New York City. Anne and Clifton, who co-led the workshop, have created a safe space for survivors to speak their truths and break their silence; they have helped so many of us heal in the process. I spent one weekend with my fellow workshop writers but I miss them every day. I take heart knowing that they are out there in the world, using their voices to create change. This writing program truly transformed my life."

"Taking part in The Voices and Faces Project's Testimony & Transformation writing program for returning citizens was the experience of a lifetime. As a formerly incarcerated man, I went into the workshop thinking 'What could these people possibly teach me?' But I soon realized that this was a group of writing teachers who are stellar when it comes to attentiveness. I could tell that Anne, our workshop facilitator, was serious about the craft of storytelling, but her demeanor and gentle confidence made me relax. I paid attention to everything that she and her colleagues Clifton and Jimmie (who co-led the workshop) said, because their words in response to our writings were jewels. They also taught me the importance of listening more empathetically, in order to respect and honor every voice in the room. This writing workshop can change you and free you. I hope that every person in the Illinois Department of Corrections can take part in it."



Renaldo Hudson, Illinois Prison Project Education Director (with Voices and Faces Project founder Anne K. Ream).



Alia Dewees, Director of Aftercare Development at Safe House Project

"My weekend in The Voices and Faces Project's testimonial writing workshop for survivors of gender-based violence was one of the most empowering, uplifting, and rejuvenating points in my career as an anti-trafficking advocate. I spent my hour car ride home from the workshop on the phone hopping from friend to friend encouraging them to apply to future workshops because of the incredible confidence and excitement I was gifted through this experience. My only complaint? I can't re-experience it every weekend! Writing and creativity have become exciting again as The Voices and Faces Project team reminded me of my passion, competence, and ability."