

THE BAND OF BROTHERS PROJECT

Beginning January 2018, the business partners of Rise with Honor, Georgia Reash (BrightSpot Communities) and Pastor Sederia Graves (Believing a Miracle), in collaboration with interested co-leaders, will begin a **men's listening project focused on issues related to the current sexual assault "justice movement"**.



The proliferation of women sexual assault accusers in 2017 has created an opportunity for both men and women to dialogue together around conscious and unconscious, internal and external, learned and biological issues – all sprung from one inquiry question: why do men assault women?

With the intention to heal and contribute wisdom to both men and women, and contribute to solutions, The Project will focus on real issues, real discussion, and real questions that are intended to cultivate insight into the experiences and mindset of men, to offer a space where men can freely talk, and to gathering information that will help shape content for the *2019 Rise With Honor Conference*; a conference focused on the healing of women veterans and active military who have been affected by sexual assault during their time of service.

The Questions

Our goal between January 2018 and July 2018 is to interview individual and groups of men with facilitated discussion in response to several questions over the next 6 months:

- Why do men assault women?
- What do men need from the whole person lens to stop assaulting women?
- What do men need to teach and model to other men and boys in order to prevent victimizing toward women and girls?

Additional important questions have surfaced through our initial interviews conducted; all of which are being documented. In addition to posed questions, The Project includes facilitated discussion, recording of ideas and video (upon group agreement) and opportunities for connection and ongoing learning. We will also gather information on helpful resources as they are discovered. Information will be shared regularly on the RWH website.

The Rise With Honor Conference

The 3rd day of the conference, Fortifying the Common Bond, is focused on supporting men, families and community organizations in responding to the issue of sexual assault and harassment.



We are using the information gained over the next 6 months of interviews to specifically tailor workshops on the 3rd conference day and offer men, and women, the opportunity to talk about challenging and important issues, together. **While the conference targets the needs of women, everyone is an important part of the healing story.**

Our data collection outcome goals include:

- Collect data and feed it back to key stakeholders so that the dialogue around sexual assault can focus on solutions and understanding
- Use data collected to shape a dynamic 3rd day of the conference
- Inspire men and women to higher standards of dialogue and the development of mutual respect and understanding

Where is the Listening Project?

Currently, our listening projects have take place in Northeast Ohio and the Atlanta GA area. As donors or investors emerge, we will take the project into a variety of geographic and utilize several media formats for added information collection and momentum building.

Being Involved in a Project Session



If you are between the age of 16 and 110 and would like to be interviewed as part of this surveying process, OR have a group of men who would like to be interviewed, please contact Georgia Reash, President, BrightSpot Communities at (216) 338-7016 or georgiareash@gmail.com for more information. We are setting up a series of dialogue groups beginning in January 2019.

The Idea for the Project

The Band of Brothers Project was inspired by the work of George Reash, a local early leader in the men's movement and an inspirational friend to men on the journey of knowing who they are, at a deeper level. The poem, [A Band of Brothers](#), was written by Warren Cambell-Gaston in October 2016, 3 weeks before George passed away. See page 3 and 4.

A Band of Brothers

for George Reash

So this is what it comes down to,
after a long life friendship,
our final offerings of affection,
strong hugs as you befriend mystery.

Now your body turns away from what it knows
toward the unfathomable we can never know
but simply trust with all that is our life.

Thirty years ago you gathered men together,
no rules, except three:

no work, no cars, no sports,

just life – the rough smooth road
the heartfelt details of daily life,
stuff men don't talk about,
not even to themselves.

We did not sit mute as one would expect
knowing how these rules might severely silence men.

Instead, you gave us a way,
with beer and supper,
to talk hard with each other,
troubles, joys, matters of the heart.

Most of what you taught we didn't know we were learning
until life demanded wisdom and we knew the source was you.

Slowly over time, we realized what we were learning
was the wonder of the masculine bond deep in the gut,
men bound by the strength of courageous vulnerability.

Now, because of you, we are a band of brothers.
Without you we would be only loosely allied,
the back slap, the shoulder punch, the knuckle bump,
the braggadocios story told to far surpass the rest.

Through you we got each other, lean and honest,
and a little bit afraid to be who men could be
when free of trying to be the disembodied
smiling shirts on the men's store manikin.

We are three-dimensional, flawed and fluid old men now,
reviewing who we were and viewing who we have become,
still choosing to become even more of what you dreamed
we could be, together and alone.

Now George, we say *thank you* with hearts full of affection,
and crying from eyes sight-blurred with tears,
we say *goodnight*.

Warren Gaston
October 24, 2016
<http://www.poetrybreaksthings.com>