

Contact:
Jessica Robinson
571-334-8652
jessica@bettersaidthandone.com
[Photos are available on request.]



Stories of Obstacles, Survival, and Empowerment

Better Said Than Done Publishes Stories About the Challenges Women Face

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - - **Better Said Than Done** is publishing an anthology of stories, *Roar: True Tales of Women Warriors* to benefit the **National Network to End Domestic Violence**. The book features true, first-hand stories from 21 female authors about the challenges that women encounter in their lives. *Roar: True Tales of Women Warriors* will be released on Sunday, April 30, 2017, at the Better Said Than Done storytelling show of the same name, performed at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave East, Vienna, Virginia 22030, at 7:30 PM. The book will be available for purchase in print and e-book on Amazon.com starting on April 30, 2017. The goal of both the show and published anthology is to empower women to share stories of obstacles they have overcome, to inspire those who may share in similar struggles, and to help others understand the obstacles women still face, even in 2017.

"I launched *Roar*, the show and the book, because I know I'm not the only woman with a story to share," said **Jessica Robinson**, of Fairfax, Virginia, founder of **Better Said Than Done**. "Storytelling is powerful: by hearing a personal story, we learn from that person's experience, empathize with that person, and, often, change our own thoughts after sharing in their experience."

Roar: True Tales of Women Warriors includes 21 stories written by women. The authors reside throughout the US, including the DC area, and Canada. Select author credits include *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Seattle Times*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *The Huffington Post*, *Medium*, journals, and other anthologies. Stories were written by bloggers, radio and podcast hosts, storytellers, performers, novelists, memoirists, and first-time authors, as well as doctors, public health professionals, lawyers, a former elected official, and more. [Author bios follow.]

The official launch of *Roar: True Tales of Women Warriors* will be celebrated on May 13, 2017, at The Auld Shebeen, 3971 Chain Bridge Rd. Fairfax, Virginia 22030, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM, with readings by some of the authors. All proceeds from the book sales benefit the **National Network to End Domestic Violence**.

Books will also be available for sale on Amazon.com and at the storytelling show hosted by **Better Said Than Done** in April: "Roar: True Tales of Women Warriors" will feature ten female storytellers sharing their true, personal stories on April 30, 2017, at Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave East, Vienna, Virginia 22030, at 7:30 PM. Doors open at 6:30 PM. Tickets are \$20 per person and can be purchased in advance at <http://www.jamminjava.com/> or at the door. All proceeds from tickets sales benefit the **National Network to End Domestic Violence**. Full bar

and dinner menus are available at Jammin' Java and seating is limited to first come, first served. (The stories are intended for an adult audience. Some of the stories in this show include portrayals of sex, abuse, and traumatic events.)

Courtney Crane, of Studio City, California, one of the book's authors, explained her experience writing this story, "Dredging up this 40-year-old story and putting it on paper, was definitely healing. I was finally able to stop blaming myself for what happened to 12-year-old me. As a mother of a teenage daughter, I have more understanding and compassion for that little girl me, and just want to wrap some love and gratitude around her. I hope there's a woman out there who might read my story and be inspired to bring her own hidden story to the surface. Hopefully, she could forgive herself, too."

"One of the best ways we can extinguish the stigma and judgment with which so many women facing already-difficult issues around reproductive health, inequality, and gender-based violence are met is to tell our stories honestly, in human, personal terms," added contributor **Elizabeth Futrell**, of Chicago, Illinois. "In doing so, we not only create community and encourage dialogue, but we also honor ourselves and the experiences that have shaped us. And if we're lucky, we inspire others to do the same."

"We've come a long way, but we have a long way to go," said **Robinson**. "If women are to be treated as equals, with respect, under the law, and under our professional, domestic, and medical roofs, women need to share their stories. So many of us have experienced inequality, abuse, and varying degrees of mistreatment based around our gender. It is both sad and comforting to know other women have been through the fire and come out the other side, with scars, yes, but as survivors. And for those who have been lucky enough not to share in some of the worst situations in this book, they need to know that these things do happen, often. We have a long way to go, but we will get there, together."

Proceeds from both the show and book will benefit the **National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)**. "At the center of our work are survivors' experiences and stories," said **Kim Gandy**, NNEDV President and CEO. "We are thrilled to partner with **Better Said Than Done** to lift up women's voices and stories of empowerment. We urge every person to speak out for survivors and build stronger communities together."

Sandra Hull, of Arlington, Virginia, shared a similar sentiment. "For far too long, I felt that my experiences were unique, but not in a good way, as if I failed at "human-ing." When I started telling my stories onstage, I was amazed when people approached me after shows to say how much they identified with what I'd talked about. That newfound connection empowered me to share a painful story from my childhood that I'd previously felt too ashamed to tell. I'll consider it a win if just one woman identifies with the story and knows she's not alone in her pain."

Purchasing tickets to the storytelling show in advance at <http://www.jamminjava.com/> is recommended as the show is expected to sell out. More information about the book, the book launch, and the contributing authors can be found at www.bettersaidthandone.com/.

The **National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)** is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that serves as the leading national voice for domestic violence victims and their allies. NNEDV's membership includes all 56 state and territorial coalitions against domestic violence, including over 2,000 local programs. NNEDV has been advancing the movement against domestic violence over 25 years, having led efforts among domestic violence advocates and survivors in urging Congress to pass the landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994. To learn more about NNEDV, please visit NNEDV.org.

Better Said Than Done defines storytelling as the art of performing a true, personal story in front of a live audience. Our stories are personal. Each storyteller writes about his or her own true experiences. And they are a *story*, meaning they have a beginning, middle, and end. Most importantly, storytelling is a performance, an art, a form of entertainment, and, from our mouths, a reality the audience will not forget. Better Said Than Done, Inc., was launched in May 2011, by Jessica Robinson, to bring the art of storytelling to Northern Virginia. For more information on upcoming shows, performers, or workshops, please visit bettersaidthandone.com.

###

Author Bios:

Courtney Crane, Studio City, California, writes stories about coming of age in the South, parenting teens, and adventures in "La-La Land". Her work was featured in the "Expressing Motherhood" Downtown L.A. 2015 & Southbay 2016 shows, and in the "Listen to Your Mother" 2016 Burbank show. She participates in the annual NOHO Lit Crawl with her beloved writing group, Ladies Who Lit. Courtney grew up in New Orleans and lives in Los Angeles with her husband, two teenagers, and oversized rescue dog. When she's not writing stories or wrangling her family, Courtney works for an art consultancy and an artsy boutique. This is her first published piece.

Elizabeth Futrell, Chicago, Illinois, works to improve health outcomes among underserved populations by expanding access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services. As the Content Development Lead for the Knowledge for Health (K4Health) Project at The Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, she sees storytelling as a critical means of health communication. In 2015, Liz and her colleagues at K4Health and Family Planning 2020 founded Family Planning Voices, a global storytelling initiative in support of contraceptive access that has published stories from individuals in more than 50 countries. Find her writing via *Medium* and *I Ate the Spider*, a decade-old writing collaborative resurfacing in 2017 as a quarterly live event. Prior to earning her Master of Science in Public Health, Liz was a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco and an English teacher in Japan and the US. She lives in Chicago with her husband and two daughters.

Susan Gordon, Ijamsville, Maryland, is a storyteller, published poet, and a prose writer of memoir and fiction. She is a skilled teller of traditional tales and has taught storytelling in colleges, universities, and from the barn on her farm. Susan is now telling personal stories that explore the weave of relationships in her life. She hosts the Hilltop Writers, is asked to read her poetry in a range of settings, and offers a series of house concerts from her home. Susan has a master's degree in narrative therapies and lives with her dog, River, in Frederick County, Maryland.

Toward the end of her forty-year career as a creator of science museums, **Sheila Grinell**, Phoenix, Arizona, began to write fiction. Her debut novel, *Appetite*, was published in May 2016. Born in a taxi in Manhattan, she studied at the Bronx High School of Science, Harvard University, and the University of California, Berkeley. She lives in Phoenix with her husband and spirited dog. To learn more, visit sheilagrinell.com.

Dawn Gross, MD, PhD, San Francisco, California, is a mother, wife, sister, and daughter, writer and hospice and palliative medicine physician practicing at the University of California, San Francisco. When not caring for patients, she can be heard on the radio as host of "Dying To Talk," on 91.7FM KALW, the first of its kind, live-call-in program dedicated to transforming the taboo around talking about death. Her writing has appeared in several journals including *The New York Times*, *JAMA*, *Science*, and *Annals of Internal Medicine*. She is an invited storyteller and hard at work on her first book. Learn more at <http://www.drasyouwish.com/>.

Storytelling has long been a component of **Sandra Hull's** (Arlington, Virginia), day job as an eLearning Instructional Designer inside the DC Beltway, but only recently has she embraced storytelling to entertain and educate live audiences with her personal experiences and truths. She's been a member of Better Said Than Done, a Fairfax, Virginia-based storytelling troupe, since 2015. Previously, she performed with a handful of DC-area amateur improv troupes and was a regularly published contestant in humor-writing contests in *The Washington Post*, *The Toronto Globe and Mail*, and *New York Magazine*. When not telling stories, Sandra practices active listening as a volunteer with Woman Within International, a non-profit organization that encourages women to support each other in fully living the lives they want.

Bushra Jabre, Vienna, Vienna, is Associate Faculty, Senior Communication Advisor of The Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs/Bloomberg School of Public Health. She was the Project Director of *Arab Women Speak Out* and the Emerging Leadership Project. She directed the annual Arabic Advances in Development Communication Regional Workshop 1992-2006. She provided technical assistance to health communication programs in the near East and North Africa, Central Asian Republics, West Africa, and the South Pacific Islands, as well as regional initiatives in the Arab World. She held the post of Regional Advisor in Health Education and Women's Programs with the UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa in Amman, Jordan. She published *Sophie's Book*, a memoir about her mother, in 2016, *Arab Women Speak Out* in 1998, *Emerging Leadership in the Arab World* in 2004, and many technical articles and books and several articles in newspapers in Arabic, English, and French.

Cheryl Shaver Kanuck, Bluffton, South Carolina, was born and raised in upstate New York, in a peaceful suburb of the city of Albany, and now lives in South Carolina's beautiful "low-country". She's retired from her career as an addiction therapist and program director, and resides in an active adult community with her husband. The story included in this volume was written for therapy, to exorcise a demon that was sucking the life from my child, by writing about my own pain. In the living and in the writing, I unearthed a strength I didn't know I had. By my sharing, I hope other women will see their own strength reflected.

Urmilla Khanna, Annandale, Virginia, a board-certified pediatrician, came to the United States as a young bride in 1963 and pursued her medical career until 2000. After her retirement, she began to write as a hobby, soon to realize that it was her passion. Besides publishing her essays in newspapers and magazines, she has published two of her short stories in *Patchwork: Stories from the Dining Table*. Her first book, *Boundaries of the Wind*---a memoir, was published in 2015, and is available on Amazon in both Kindle and print editions.

Magin LaSov Gregg's, (Frederick, Maryland), writing has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Rumpus*, *Hippocampus Magazine*, *River Teeth's Beautiful Things*, and other publications. *Proximity Magazine* named her as a finalist in its 2016 inaugural Personal Essay Prize. She lives with her husband Carl and their four rescue pets.

Mary Nicol Lucas, Fairfax, Virginia, is a marketing consultant to the credit union industry. Her areas of expertise include name development and rebranding; creation of advertising materials, collateral, website development and public relations. She started her marketing career with the advertising agency J. Walter Thompson USA, and she worked for DDB Needham Worldwide before spending 19 years as a corporate Director of Sales and Marketing for CORT, a Berkshire Hathaway Company.

Judy Nicastro, Seattle, Washington, grew up in New Jersey and became political at the age of 14 when her father died and Congress repealed a law that guaranteed college to children whose parents died. She got angry, and worked her way through college at the University of Washington and then graduated University of Washington School of Law. Wanting to make a difference and represent the working class, she ran for political office and won a citywide seat in Seattle as a City Councilmember, representing over 550,000 people. No longer in public office, she hosts a podcast called, "Mayberry with Highrises." She gives speeches and writes articles. She has been printed in *The New York Times*, *The Seattle Times*, and other publications. Her husband and 2 children remind her every day that being silly and having courage make for a beautiful life.

Kim O'Connell is a writer based in Arlington, Virginia, whose articles and essays have appeared in national and regional publications including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Brain, Child, Yahoo News*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *National Parks*, *PsychologyToday.com*, *Thread*, and more. Her short fiction and poetry have appeared in *Little Patuxent Review* and *unFold Poetry*, and she has been a writer in residence at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and at Shenandoah National Park. Her website is www.kimaconnell.com.

Laura Bowman Pimentel originally hails from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, but has lived in the DC area for the past 17 years. In addition to writing whenever she can, Laura is the mom of two amazing boys, a full-time real estate agent and a part-time food tour guide. She loves cooking and exploring the DC restaurant scene, as well as taking in great art of all genres. Her personal blog -- www.yourdcabode.com -- highlights her explorations around Washington, DC. Laura served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic, which is where she met her ex-husband and father of her children. Her experience with her husband's struggle to adjust to life in the United States and the resulting mental health consequences have inspired her to speak out and dispel myths about both mental illness and immigration.

Jessica Robinson is a storyteller with, and the founder of, Better Said Than Done (bettersaidthandone.com), a storytelling organization in Fairfax, Virginia, with monthly, themed storytelling shows featuring true, personal stories, and with storytelling workshops for non-profits, corporations, and individuals. Jessica's first novel, the urban fantasy *Caged*, was published in October 2016, under the pen name JP Robinson (jprobinsonwriter.com). Jessica is currently working on the sequel, *Rise*, due out this summer. Her true, personal story, "The Game," was published in the short story collection *Sucker for Love*, and "What Are the Odds" was published in *The Northern Virginia Review*, Volume 29.

Erin Rodgers is a storyteller, writer, and workshop facilitator from Toronto, Canada. She coaches storytelling, writing and creativity and has taught workshops on both across Canada. As a comedy performer and storyteller, Erin performed across Canada and in the US. She is the proud creator of storytelling shows *Storystar* and *Awkward*. Her one-person storytelling show, *Tough*, was featured in The Toronto Storytelling Festival and the Winnipeg Fringe.

Danielle Stonehirsch, Silver Spring, Maryland, has been reading and writing all her life. For the last three years, she has worked with the Youth Service Opportunities Project as the Program Director in Washington, DC, managing educational programs which engage youth in volunteer service to the homeless and hungry. Her B.A. in literature comes from Washington University in St. Louis, and she now lives with her beloved husband in Silver Spring, Maryland. She is grateful to her family for their love and support.

Mary Supley Foxworth, Reston, Virginia, tells true, personal stories with Better Said Than Done and leads workshops in the art of storytelling. Though she has been an editor of and contributor to other non-fiction books, her story in *Roar* is her first credit as an author. She enjoys writing recipes and is working on a cookbook.

Madison Symes lives in Washington, DC, with her best friends and a large cat, comically named Nugget.

Anne Thomas, Washington, DC, is the 2013 National Storytelling Festival Slam Champion. Her storytelling has been featured on national U.S. storytelling programs such as The Moth, Storycorps, and RISK!. She has been published in *The New York Times* and is a coauthor of the book, *Sucker For Love*. Anne spent most of her career as a civil rights attorney, conflict resolution expert, and leadership development innovator. She is currently writing a memoir that will be published in 2018. You can learn more about Anne at her website, annebthomas.com.

Daya Wakens, Syracuse, New York, is a member of the Writers Like Writers Group, and her writing projects are primarily humanitarian concerns. Daya's "Wisdomgram" was published in the "Wayfarers All," November 2013 issue of the *American Athenaeum* literary journal, and her short story, "Embraced with Clarity," is published in *Break the Cycle Volume III*, published by Kathy Chaffin Gerstorff in 2016. Persistence and the power to rise above changed her journey into living life to its fullest with her wonderful husband and family.