



April 5, 2026

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It's April again. April is the month of the annual Giving Voice campaign put on by Women Writing for (a) Change, Bloomington. Our challenge is to raise \$15,000 to help support our outreach work and tuition assistance programs, sustain our programs and support our mission. Embedded in our challenge to raise money is the challenge to help people understand the importance of what we do.

Writing in community can be life changing. It can be healing. Here's a story that illustrates that for me:

Last fall I had the opportunity to visit Viet Nam as part of an educational tour. I had a marvelous trip. I traveled with some amazing people and got to see a part of the world that is an important piece of recent United States history and very much a measure of our current consciousness. What exactly did we do over there? What happened? Why?

While in Saigon, my travel companion and I booked a boat trip on the Saigon River. We boarded the boat just ahead of a gentlemen from the states. We exchanged pleasantries, and he shared that he was from Boston, but he had emigrated to the US from the Mekong Delta in 1985 when he was 17 years old. We chatted some more about what brought him on his trip, and while chatting, I did some math and asked him when he was born.

He looked at me and said quite simply, "I was born in 1968 during the Tet offensive."

"You really must have some story to tell," I responded. I could only imagine what he and his family had been through in this country at that time.

"Yes," he told me, "I do, and I have told it and told it and told it. I tell it to anyone who will listen. The reason I am alive and okay today is because I have told my story. It has healed me."

Telling his story healed him.

I think of that Vietnamese man, when a young woman in my jail circle writes of her homelessness and addiction, or a girl in youth circle writes of her loneliness, or a Stone Belt client writes about being different. I understand that something about the act of telling our truth, whether it be coming-of-age in the Mekong delta during an armed conflict or struggling with demons that cause addiction, can bring us understanding, perspective and maybe even a little healing. Although people come to our circle for many many reasons. I know that one of the benefits a writer receives—is the gift of peace (and maybe also a little grace.)

If you have enjoyed one of our circles or know someone who has and you are in a place to give, I hope you will consider making a donation to support our important work through Giving Voice!

Warmest wishes,

Amy

Amy Cornell,
Campaign & Board Chair