



## Announcing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Russ Wilson Essay Contest

1<sup>st</sup> Place: \$500

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: \$250

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: \$100

### Who is Russ Wilson?

Russ Wilson was a dear friend of Executive Director Phil Valentine and of the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR), a man in recovery, a father, a son, a brother and a person who loved to write.

Here's a sample of his writing, a "simple" Facebook post.

*"That moment, late late Friday afternoon with sunlight still coming in the west windows and another hour of daylight left; when, at the end of the soul-numbing, relentless winter, you understand, with the light, airy half of the year just begun and the trudging-out, slogging half just behind; you know on this first whole day of spring, that green trees, birdsongs, warm bright mornings, cool quiet evenings, are all not only possible, but imminent. Here's to THAT moment."*  
~March 21, 2014

Russ was an inspiration to many in the recovery community. CCAR is sponsoring this essay contest in his memory. Russ died on June 28, 2014 of what is now believed to be a subdural hematoma. He was sober when he passed and just 55 years old.

Contestants may choose one of 3 topics for this year's contest.

1. Living in recovery in a "non-recovery" environment.
2. Fear and faith – an inner conflict.
3. My personal pathway of recovery.



Russ Wilson with his two daughters

Send your typed, double-spaced submission (1,500 words maximum, preferably in a Microsoft Word document) to [essaycontest@ccar.us](mailto:essaycontest@ccar.us). Contest begins at 12:01 am EST on November 17, 2016 (This would have been Russ' 10<sup>th</sup> sober anniversary) and runs through 11:59 pm EST on December 26, 2016. All submitted essays must be nonfiction. Void where prohibited by law. Entries will not be returned. Russ' family members, CCAR staff and selected individuals from the recovery community will select the winners.

Winning essays, and parts of essays, will be used by CCAR to promote recovery through social media, websites and printed material.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. Who is eligible?**

A. Anyone can submit an essay. You do not have to be in personal recovery. CCAR staff, Board and their family members are NOT eligible.

### **Q. How should I format my entry?**

A. Essays should be submitted in English at a maximum of 1,500 words, printed and double-spaced on 8½-by-11-inch paper. Essays exceeding this length or handwritten may not be considered. If submitted by e-mail, we prefer that you send the essay in a Microsoft Word document; however, we will also consider essays that are pasted into the body of the e-mail itself. Be sure to include your name, address, and phone numbers (home, work, cell) in the body of the e-mail and on any copies or attachments of the essay itself.

### **Q. How do I submit my entry?**

A. You have two options.

1. E-mail your submission to [essaycontest@ccar.us](mailto:essaycontest@ccar.us)
2. Mail your entry to the following address: CCAR, Russ Wilson Essay Contest, 198 Wethersfield Avenue, Hartford, CT 06114.

Each e-mail submission will receive a return message verifying that the essay was received. Please be aware that due to the volume of submissions, we cannot send verification that we have received your specific submission by mail. Additionally, please note that winners and runners-up will be notified in and around January 10, 2017. If you are not contacted, you are free to submit your piece elsewhere.

### **Q. What happens if I go over the word limit?**

A. Your essay can be excluded from consideration. Although there is no word minimum, we strongly encourage all contest participants to submit at least 1,000 words to maximize their chances of winning.

### **Q. Can I choose to remain anonymous?**

A. Unfortunately, we cannot consider anonymous entries for this contest.

### **Q. My piece has been previously published. Will you consider it?**

A. No. All entries must be original pieces of work and not be previously published.

### **Q. Should I send in photos or other memorabilia that relate to my essay?**

A. Please don't. The essays are judged on the following criteria: originality (25 percent), creativity (25 percent), use of language (25 percent) and appropriateness to contest theme (25 percent). No supporting materials will be considered, and they cannot be returned to you. We are honored that the family of Russ Wilson will serve as judges.

### **Q. Is there anything else you can tell me about how to stand out from the crowd?**

A. Certainly. Here are a few pointers from the people who will judge the contest.

- **Stick to the theme of the contest.** Sounds obvious, right? But we anticipate getting many entries that diverge—sometimes wildly—from the stated topic. You may have an amazing essay in the bottom drawer of your desk, but if it doesn't cover the contest theme, it's not going to win.
- **But don't feel the need to parrot back the exact wording of the contest theme in your essay.** For example, if the theme is "What was the most important day in your life?" try not to begin the piece with "The most important day of my life was..."
- **Check your spelling.** Double-duh, or so you'd think.
- **Avoid clichés.**
- **It takes many drafts and a lot of work to craft an award-winning essay.**