



Announcing the 4th Annual Russ Wilson Essay Contest

Submissions Due December 27th

1st Place : \$500

2nd Place: \$250

3rd Place: \$100



Contestants may choose one of the following three topics for this year's contest.

Living in recovery in a "non-recovery" environment
Fear and Faith - an inner conflict
Your personal pathway of recovery

Contest is open to all. You do not have to be a person in recovery to enter.
Email Submissions to essaycontest@ccar.us by 11:59 PM EST Dec 27, 2017
Maximum 1, 500 words
Must be typed & double spaced

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.

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 a subdural hematoma. He was sober when he passed and just 55 years old.

"That moment, 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 trudged-out, slogging half just behind; you know on this first whole day of Spring, that green trees, bird songs, warm bright mornings, cool quiet evenings, are not only possible, but imminent. Here's to THAT moment." - Russ Wilson Facebook post, March 21, 2014.



Russ with his two daughters



It takes many drafts and a lot of work to craft an award-winning essay!

Contest Rules

- **Submissions may be used by CCAR to promote recovery.**
- **Entries will not be returned.**
- **All entries must be original, nonfiction, and previously unpublished.**
- **Please see below for Frequently Asked Questions**

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
2. Mail your entry to the following address: CCAR, Russ Wilson Essay Contest, 75 Charter Oak Ave, Suite 305, Hartford, CT 06106

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 12, 2018. 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.**