

Beginnings XIII

A PUBLICATION OF ADULT STUDENT WRITING OF THE

Ohio Writers' Conference

OHIO LITERACY RESOURCE CENTER

Foreword

Every time we sit down to an empty page or blank screen to write, we are offered the opportunity to create ourselves anew, to begin again. That is part of the power and allure of writing, and remains one of the inspiring beliefs of the Ohio Literacy Resource Center's Beginnings project. I was honored to be a guest speaker at last year's 12th Annual Ohio Writers' Conference and am equally honored to introduce this year's anthology, *Beginnings XIII*.

What inspired me most about the Ohio Writers' Conference was the spirit of inclusiveness and deep listening that occurred throughout the entire program. As we listened to each other, I felt that, collectively, we were giving voice to a much larger, hopeful story of ABLE programs throughout the state of Ohio. And indeed, this story included many heartfelt tributes to the dedicated teachers, administrators, and volunteers who offer their talents, time, and energy so generously throughout the year. I have attended many writers' conferences, but none have inspired and uplifted me the way the Ohio Writers' Conference did. Robert Bly has said that "a poem is not completed until it is heard." The same could also be said about any powerful story. I was deeply moved to hear and witness this medley of authentic voices.

Congratulations to all the ABLE authors whose voices grace these pages and to all the students throughout Ohio who have written down and spoken their truth. Congratulations, as well, to the dedicated teachers and organizers who breathe their passion and dedication into the lives of their students.

The title of this year's anthology, *Beginnings XIII*, speaks volumes for the energy and inspiration that continues to flow through the ABLE program. Thirteen years of giving voice to the truth within our lives. Thirteen years of listening to one another with the hope of starting afresh. Thirteen years of beginning anew!

David Hassler

