
Author Biographies

ABLE CLASS (p. 29)

The ABLE Class from Great Oaks Institute of Technical & Career Development has collaborated on a poem. Members of the class are Diane Freeman, Vickie Hargraves, Kum Sun Kim, Vickie Lewis, Hortencia Lynch, Rosalba McCain, Debbie Shepherd, Shin Young Welch, and Socorro Wood.

FUMIKO ADAIR (p. 57)

Hooray! I got lucky again! I was born and raised in Japan. I have lived in Ohio for 12 years. Still I have troubles in all areas of English, and people hardly understand my English speaking. I am also struggling to learn about special education, like what is the meaning of IDEA 20 U.S.C. §1400 for advocating for my daughter who has various diagnoses, such as PDD: Pervasive Developmental Disorder and VAA: Verbal Auditory Agnosia.

MELINDA BARNES (p. 75)

I am married to a wonderful man, and we have two beautiful children (Autumn, age 2, and Zachary, 5 months). I am going to Ravenna Even Start to get my GED.

CLAUDE BERRY (p. 97)

I was born in the beautiful hills of West Virginia and moved to Ohio in my teens. I have had a very long, full life. I began attending GED classes so I could be a help and example to my wonderful grandsons. Since I have been here I have been privileged to meet many great people. We have all learned from each other.

SARAH BLAIR (p. 9)

I am 22 years old. I have been writing since I was 11 years old. I like to write because it helps me get out all of my feelings, and it helps me express my feelings better.

ANGIE BLOOMFIELD (p. 83)

CONSTANCE BROWN (p. 110)

Constance was pleasantly surprised that her work "Forever" was selected for the *Beginnings* publication since she was just jotting down her thoughts. Constance is enrolled in the Cleveland Municipal Schools Even Start Program at Charles Lake School. She is the mother of three children. In addition to her interest in poetry, she is also interested in music, arts and crafts, and outdoor sports. Constance is expecting her first grandchild in May. The Brown family's creative flair will be passed on to another generation.

ROSE M. BUCKNER (p. 46)

Being a student in the ABLE Class at Live Oaks has been very rewarding for me. Writing has revived old memories of my high school days during the '40s at Milford High School, where I graduated in 1948. The encouragement I have received from my excellent teacher at Live Oaks has given me the inspiration to write again. I'm excited that my story was chosen.

JENNIFER BURLILE (p. 84)

I was born in London, Ohio. I am the proud mother of a two-year-old daughter, and I'm studying for my GED. I like poetry and reading.

TONSHAL BUTLER (p. 43)

LESLIE R. CARRIER (p. 32)

CHRIS CARTER (p. 4)

Chris has written many poems and has received previous awards for his work. He is now on his way to pursuing many goals in his life. Hopefully he will continue to write more poems and be recognized for them.

FLAVIO CENDERELLI (p. 86)

Flavio is from Italy. He came to the US in 1958. He was a sculptor until he retired. He likes to ride a bike in his free time and enjoys attending ESOL classes.

SLOWOMIV CHMIELEWSKI (p. 70)

Slowomiv was born in Poland. He came to the US five months ago with friends. He is single, and his favorite hobbies and interests are photography, reading and sports.

SUMAYA CLARIDGE (p. 85)

Sumaya is from Peru. She came to the US in February 2001. She and her husband are very happy because they are expecting a child in April.

JESSICA CRAWFORD (p. 42)

I am twenty-three years old and live in Dayton. I love studying. I enjoy writing and performing music. I plan to study computer science and to pursue a career in music. I try to surround myself with everything positive in life. I cherish my parents and am grateful for the help of my teachers.

MARIE DAVIS (p. 89)

I was married for thirty years, and I have two children and four grandchildren. My husband passed away twelve years ago. Since I have more time, I decided to go back to school to get my GED so I can get a better job. I am gaining more confidence!

BILLIE JO EAKLE (p. 41)

I am a single mother with a 3-year-old daughter. I work at DLH Industries to support her and me. I go to the learning center to get my GED. That's how I got the privilege to enter the essay contest and get it published.

LOUIS EATON (p. 51)

I am 33 years old. I'm trying to get my GED and my CDL's so I can make a better life for my wife and me. I have a son who is 9 years old who likes to whittle.

PHILIP EDWARDS (p. 93)

KATHLEEN FIELDS (p. 73)

I finished 12 years of school without enough credits to graduate. After 23 years of excuses not to go back to school, I finally did it. The thought of going back was more frightening than actually doing it. After I took that first step, it wasn't that bad. It's one small step at a time. My teacher, Deb Baker, helped me. Without her encouragement, I couldn't have done it.

SUSAN FISHER (p. 54)

PAULINE FOOR (p. 48)

MARION FORD (p. 11)

Marion spends her spare time attending art shows in her community and walking in Franklin Park, Columbus, feeding the ducks. She loves the outdoors and the sound of nature. Marion loves to see a sunset and a sunrise and most of all she loves the laughter of people of all ages. Marion decided to write this essay after a teacher said to her, "Yes, you can!"

KATHY GRAY (p. 111)

I am a 38-year-old single mother of 4 children, and we live in New London, Ohio. I worked hard to get my GED and was surprised when my teacher suggested I enter this essay for the writers' conference. Better yet, I was shocked when I was told that my essay was going to be published. I had to laugh in disbelief.

CSABA GREGOR (p. 87)

Csaba was born in Hungary. In August he came with his wife to Cleveland. He enjoys working with computers, especially designing web pages.

BARBARA S. HALL (p. 77)

I'm married and have three grown children and six grandchildren. I have lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, for the past ten years. My personal interests include gardening, cooking, bird watching, and studying world history. I'm presently enrolled in Managing Cosmetology at Western Hills School of Beauty and Hair Design.

VICKIE HARGRAVES (p. 62)

I am a 39-year-old mother of three children. I also have had entries published in the *Beginnings* books for the last four years. I love to write. I also love music and enjoy singing. I have God to thank for all.

ANGELA K. HENSLEY (p. 21)

I am 19 years old., and I like my writing to be funny. Bringing a smile to someone's face is a goal of mine. I like to sit and reflect on the old days. Writing about childhood brings a smile to my face.

PATRICIA HORTON (p. 22)

I am 24 years old and a single working mom. I have a 2-year-old son, Brandon. I am trying to get an evening job so I can come back to Even Start and work on my education.

TREVA JACKSON (p. 101)

I have six children, one handsome son and five beautiful girls. I was born in Pasadena, California, and have two brothers and four sisters.

VINCALITA KETCHAM (p. 30)

I am from Detroit, Michigan. I am sixteen years old and I have been through a lot these past two years.

KUM SUN KIM (p. 53)

I am a single mother of two daughters, and I am attending GED classes. I am very proud that the story about my grandfather is published.

SAGAT KOUCHKOUMBAEV (p. 87)

Sagat is from Russia. He came to the US in August 2002. He came here to compete in Kung Fu and decided to stay to study English. In Russia, Sagat taught physical education and coached.

CONG LUONG (p. 50)

I am a man who wishes to get a job as an operator AutoCAD. To prepare for it, I spent 2 years at Southern Ohio College and received my Associates' Degree. Life is not like my dream. It's very hard for me to get that job. I currently attend the Learning Center at Pierre Foods.

WENDY MARTIN (p. 52)

ARTHUR L. MASSENGILL (p. 35)

I was raised in Tennessee, moved to Ohio at the age of nineteen, found a job and got married. I have a son and daughter, a grandson and granddaughter that I adore. After retiring, I decided to go to school and work toward receiving a GED. I enjoy writing.

CHONG MAYNARD (p. 10)

TOREKA MILLER (p. 25)

REBECCA MOREHOUSE (p. 60)

I am a 38-year-old mother of two wonderful children, Danyelle who is 18 and Johnny who is 9. Writing has always been a passion of mine, which I hope to pass on to my kids. It is never too late to do better. I have been going to school since October of 2001 and plan to get my GED in April 2002. I would never be able to do any of this without the support of my family and friends.

REBECCA MULDREW (p. 16)

I am 32 years old. I was born in Prescott, Arkansas, and now live in Dayton. I am the proud mother of four. I enjoy going to church, singing in the church choir, and playing basketball. Even though I have had a drug problem, I still try to do what's right. I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me.

BRANDI MURPHY (p. 76)

I am a single mother of a 3 1/2-year-old son. I got my GED at the Even Start Program. I enjoy dancing, the outdoors, and walking outside. Since I earned my GED, I am going to further my education by going to a beauty school to become a cosmetologist. Having my work recognized has been so exciting for me.

BEN NAIDZNSKI (p. 12)

SHALISA NASH (p. 56)

I'm a 25-year-old mother of four daughters. When finished getting my GED, I plan on going to college to become a dental hygienist.

ANH PHUONG NGUYEN (p. 45)

I am working at Pierre Foods and a student at the Learning Center. I joined the Learning Center to improve my English, reading, and writing so I could pass my GED test. Finally, I accomplished this goal and passed it in December 2001.

ROMAN OSTROWSKI (p. 88)

Roman is from Poland. He came to the US in 1994. He is interested in science, social studies, and many kinds of sports. He enjoys exercising. He skis, swims, and plays table tennis and volleyball. Roman is active in the Senior Olympics in the Greater Cleveland area.

AMY PERRY (p. 23)

I am twenty years old and have been coming to GED classes since October 2001. After I get my GED I plan to go to college in Colorado. I am a member of SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving). The poem is dedicated to my father who was killed by a drunk driver on June 12, 1993.

ANTHONY C. PORTER (p. 6)

Anthony Porter was born in Cleveland, Ohio, attended Glenville High School, and received his diploma through an alternative educational program. He attended Cuyahoga Community College for two quarters while working part time in various jobs. A substance abuse problem consumed a good portion of his early years, and it wasn't until he conquered his addictions that a whole new life emerged. After some counseling at the One Stop Career Center in Cleveland, it was suggested that he attend an adult education class to upgrade his math and communication skills. His referral brought him to the Cleveland ABLE program at CWRU where he is currently preparing to re-enter CCC and pursue an associate degree in Human Applied Science with a specialty in chemical dependency.

AMY POWELL (p. 27)

I'm 24 years old. I have 2 children, and I'm expecting another child. Getting my GED is a must for me. In my spare time, I enjoy writing poems and spending time with my family.

CAROL RADCLIFF (p. 71)

Carol loves to spend time with her mother, sister and brother. Her priorities are to reach goals in life of satisfaction to her. Thanks to the help and determination of peers, teachers and family, she is heading towards success.

VICTORIA RENDEROS (p. 33)

I've been writing since the age of fifteen. I love to write poetry. When things are hard and life gets tough, that's what I turn to. "Dark Heart" was written in my teenage years. It means trapped in a life that one doesn't understand. It also means, "Never let your dreams go, and always follow your heart." Don't put chains and locks on life.

CAROL RUDDER (p. 114)

Carol was born in Canada. She moved to the United States when she was five years old. Currently she has two children, four grandchildren and one great grandchild. Carol works at Pierre Foods, Inc., in Cincinnati, Ohio. Carol enjoys going to our Learning Center and also enjoys working in her yard.

VIKTOR SAYEVYCH (p. 86)

Viktor is from the Ukraine. He came to the US three years ago. He is married and is a truck driver for a local company.

AMY SHEFFIELD (p. 113)

DEBBIE SHEPHERD (p. 109)

I am forty-eight years old and a high school dropout. I dropped out of school at a very young age. I am now attending my second year of ABE classes at Live Oaks. Thanks to my wonderful teacher, I feel I may have a chance.

DALE D. SHERMAN (p. 64)

MASTAN SINGH (p. 85)

Mastan is from India. He came to the US in 1991. He works full time at a plastics factory. Besides ESOL classes, Mastan also attends citizenship classes.

KAREN SMITH (p. 24)

I am a divorced mother of two very special girls, Cynthia who is 12 and Angelica who is 5. This is my 5th time in Beginnings.

SANDRA LEE SULLIVAN (p. 107)

I am living in a group home since I had a nervous breakdown. I have two children ages 26 and 23. My family is very important to me. I attend the Glenwood Center in Youngstown. I have been coming to class since February 2000. I enjoy coming to class.

PAM TOLLEY (p. 38)

I come from a small town named Crooksville, Ohio. I've lived here for 32 years. I am 37 years old, the mother of one son, and I am happily married to a wonderful man. I am currently going to school to get my GED. I decided to go back to school to prove to myself that I can graduate no matter how old I am. I want to be a teachers aide in my son's school. I really enjoy working with children. I volunteered a lot last year in my son's kindergarten class. That's when I knew what I wanted to do for a living.

KIM HAI TRAN (p. 100)

I came to the US in 1997. I attend the Learning Center at Pierre Foods to improve my English. I love reading, cooking, and watching movies.

KLARA TRUSOVA (p. 99)

I was born and grew up in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), Russia. After my education, I became a chemistry teacher and researcher. In 1993 I arrived in Youngstown, Ohio, to be living near my daughter and her family. I could not speak English (my second language is German) and started to study at The English Center. Since January 2000 I have been an American citizen.

GLORIA TURNER (p. 69)**AMANDA VASBINDER (p. 14)**

As long as I can remember, I have written to communicate my feelings to the world. At fifteen, my mother passed away and, for a couple of years, I was lost. Three years later, at eighteen, I met a wonderfully odd man who helped me to see that although my mother's time here was over, mine was not. At twenty-one now, I am currently a stay-at-home mother to my fiance's five-year-old daughter (whom I love more than the world) and am seriously contemplating the thought of pursuing a writing career.

RUSSELL WALKER (p. 74)

I was born in Holly Spring, Mississippi, and lived there for eighteen years. I was drafted into the US Navy in 1943. I served two years in World War II. When I came home, I married and planted crops like cotton, corn, peanuts, watermelon, and sugar cane. I had a friend in Ohio. He wrote to me and told me to come on up here, that I would be able to work in one of the rubber shops. That was good news to a cotton-picking man. So I boarded the train and came to Akron. I went to work for General Tire & Rubber Co. I worked there for thirty years and retired. My dream has come true when I found Project: LEARN.

GINA WELLSRING (p. 34)

I am 35 years old, and I have three girls. I enjoy reading, writing, and spending time with my family and friends. I hope to someday write an autobiography about my life and to get it published.

JUDELEENA WENNING (p. 44)

I'm 27 years old, and I attend Lathrop Even Start Adult Education classes in Canton, Ohio. I have three children-- Stephanie, 8, Timothy, 5, and Michael, 4. My greatest goal is to obtain my GED so I can go to college and get a good job.

SOCORRO WOOD (p. 3)

I am a married, proud Mexican mother of two beautiful girls, believe 100% of love, and because of that, I am in this country learning the new language and loving its people.