

# *Issues and Attitudes*



*Artwork created by Amber Crago*



## MEETING THE NEEDS OF OHIO'S STUDENTS

My name is Beverly Pattyanne Tinsley. I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, and attended Cincinnati Public Schools. I would like to explain how a learning disability can lead to social difficulties and the effect this can have on communities as a whole by outlining my own experiences. Many students in Ohio suffer from learning disabilities, and these students need support so they can become productive citizens.

My earliest recollection of my learning disability was around the age of five. I was the only sibling in a large family that encountered problems with maintaining passing grades in school. My many health complications necessitated various medications, and I had what I felt to be a severe speech impediment. This caused much ridicule from family as well as friends and the entire neighborhood.

When I started school, my wonderful mother researched and discovered special educational programs for me and enrolled me in speech therapy. Thank you, Mother, for your love and devotion. My therapist was a white lady, and she worked as hard for me as I did for her. She understood that I felt stupid and how difficult it was for me when others seemed to share this opinion. My other teachers felt I was not working up to my potential and compared me to my brothers and sisters. This compounded the problem and added to my confusion. My speech therapist encouraged me to "visualize" and concentrate on each word as I strived to speak correctly. Television also helped considerably as I could mimic the words without fear of others criticizing my futile attempts.

By this time I truly hated school. I had been enrolled in special classes, which added to the label of dummy that I had affixed to myself. I had few friends and no self-esteem. I was consistently late for classes and would sneak out early. Of course, this could lead to my teachers calling my mother, and I would be punished. I was punished not for my learning

disability but for my misbehavior and lack of efforts. However, this is difficult for a child to perceive, and I felt I could do nothing right.

My mother tried so hard to help me to learn. At this time in Ohio not much was known about learning disabilities. My report card continued to reflect my seemingly miserable attempts to learn by conventional methods of teaching. So I was returned to the special education class – or the “class of dummies.” I wanted to drop out of this torturous madness, but my parents would not hear of it. Somehow, I graduated.

God must have seen me and sent me my salvation – my son, Rayshawn Durtler. Bless my son for his unconditional love and support for his mother. However, my relationship with his father did not survive because of my inability to confront him with what I felt was the truth of myself. I could never bring myself to tell him what a failure I felt I was. His ultimate rejection led to my conviction that only smart “good” people were acceptable.

It was not until 1990 that I learned that my particular disability had a name. I was watching Oprah one day, and they were discussing dyslexia. Now that I knew what it was, I felt I could seek help. I went into therapy and continue with this therapy today. It is a lot of work to change a lifetime of conditioning. I am learning that I am not a bad person. There is no reason to be ashamed.

One day, my son and I found ourselves bored with the rainy weather and started playing silly games with his little cars. At first there were no rules, but a broken fingernail changed that! So, a few simple rules evolved. Eventually, his interest strayed to another project. I had become intrigued with this little game of ours. I sat up most of the night developing a game board and called it Car Shop. My son and I played this game constantly. Eventually, the neighborhood children were playing and competing with us. The board became well used, and the kids were playing it instead of watching Saturday morning cartoons. Friends encouraged me to take my game to an attorney for rights protection. That’s

how good they felt it was. So, I found an attorney and then an engineer to do the prototype. I am currently looking for investors to help me get this game out on the market.

In my opinion, this game has been the beginning of something very exciting for me. I have discovered a sense of self-confidence and self-worthiness, a new point of view of myself, as well as a chance to make money.

Then I realized that if I could do something like this, surely I could help other learning disabled people. So, I devised a way of educating people with these disabilities.

**Creative Minds At Work** is a concept designed to help children and adults focus on constructive ideas and learn employment and entrepreneur skills. This program works for those with or without learning disabilities. It is a hands-on learning technique that students participate in through playing games. It is an entry point for success for those who have difficulty with the conventional way of learning. I volunteer my time in the Cincinnati Public School system to work with children using this program.

I hope that children growing up in Ohio will never have to endure the rejection that I felt. Children with learning disabilities need to be diagnosed early and then receive the instruction they need to become successful learners. I am living proof that a person with a learning disability can succeed in life.

*Beverly Tinsley*

## PLAYA-2-PLAYA

Nike Air's on my feet;  
I'm way 2 sweet!  
Got a ton at my waist don't trip;  
Step and get busted...

Living life 2 the fullest so feel this unstoppable;  
Go copp this, real shit that's collecting "Mill's  
Like (Bill Gates)"...

Sloppy tactics get your butt whipped & kicked "The  
Ohio State" way all day!

Smoke green's darker than my "Regal" or the eagle on  
My deep dish "Daytona's"...

With plush seats, brown sugar like my complexion,  
Don't stop or you'll get whipped my way, and that's the  
"uptown" way...

*Jermaine Martin*

## MEAN STREETS

Why must the streets be a war zone  
Where people cannot walk alone?  
Remember how it used to be?  
Doors were open, people free.

Collectively we are in a cage  
Built with hatred, fueled by rage.  
It is so bad and getting worse.  
We read the news, Bible and verse.

Once we opened our hands to all.  
We did not falter, we did not fall.  
Now we keep ourselves shut away  
Hoping for a better day.

They say it will change, we must cope;  
But on the streets they're selling dope.  
So much violence, so much hate--  
Will help come before it's too late?

How did we get to such a place?  
We need kindness, we need grace.  
We need to live in peace and trust  
Or I think God may get rid of us.

*Kim Matthews*

## REMEMBER ME?

I was that dude racing the block  
I'm that person in DeSoto Bass in 2001 that got popped and  
shot

I'm that brotha who got in the game at eleven  
I'm that brotha sitting in a cell at twenty-seven

I'm that dude that used to smoke crack  
I'm that fiend who robbed your brother and your cousin Jack

I'm that cat that was living hard  
I'm that brotha from DeSoto Bass Boulevard

Now I'm a servant of the Lord  
I'm the one who strives to follow God and yearns for accord

I'm that brotha who knows I need help  
I'm that one who accepts I can't do it by myself

I share these words for people to see  
Everybody capable of change: Remember me.

*DeShawn Steed*



## DON'T USE DRUGS

I am going to give you some reasons why a person should not use drugs. The most common drugs that are used today are alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. Many other illegal drugs are also very dangerous.

Alcohol is contained in beer, wine, brandy, bourbon, etc. Because of its availability, it is the most commonly abused drug in this country. It is involved in almost half of all suicides, murders, and accidental deaths in the U.S. Also, how about all the homes that are broken because of domestic violence and child abuse?

I have personally known alcoholics who were good people when they were sober, but let them get started drinking and they were not nice to be around. I even knew one person who died of DTs. Nobody starts out to be an alcoholic, but to be one it starts with the first drink.

Of all the different ways that tobacco is used, smoking tobacco cigarettes is the most addictive and deadly. Cigarettes contain nicotine, a poison used in insecticide, and black tar that sticks to the lungs and makes breathing difficult. Cigarette smoke contains about 4000 chemicals, including such poisons as arsenic, DDT, and formaldehyde. Smokers increase their chance of developing lung cancer 220% compared to lifetime non-smokers.

I know about this personally because my sister was a smoker who died of lung cancer. Most smokers are very inconsiderate of non-smokers; they will light up without asking us if we care if they smoke in our house or car. I don't believe they intend to be inconsiderate. They don't realize non-smokers do not like the smell of tobacco. We non-smokers really don't like the secondhand smoking and the

side effects of it. The secondhand smoke causes irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat of non-smokers. These are some of the reasons that you should not use the drug called tobacco.

You may say there is nothing wrong with the use of marijuana or that marijuana is used to help people medically. Most people who use it are not using it for medical purposes, but use it for the high or whatever it is they are looking for. Marijuana users ingest almost four times as much tar as tobacco smokers. Risks for marijuana users include cancer, brain damage, heart disease, and lung damage, just to name a few. Peer pressure is the number one reason people start smoking marijuana. What is wrong with just standing up and saying "no" to those who try to intimidate you to use marijuana?

These are just a few of the most common drugs that you may be tempted with, but is it worth the problems that are caused by their use? To me, it is almost like they don't care what happens to them. But what about the worry and fear of the people who love them? No person is an island unto himself; we touch each others' lives in everything we do. Is it a selfish person who doesn't consider the hurt they cause other people and themselves? I will let you decide. These are some of the reasons you shouldn't use drugs.

*Leland Salyer*

## TWIN TOWERS

We stood so tall above them all,  
Watching over our city,  
The two of us, oh so pretty,  
Seeing and hearing every little creak,  
Echoes of cars and people speak.

We knew things that no one could know,  
Never telling our secrets,  
We stood tall and strong until one dreadful morning  
When something went wrong,  
Two planes from nowhere crashed right through  
Us without a care,  
Two balls of flame,  
So many lives were claimed,  
One by one we fell tumbling to the ground,  
Turning life and sound into silence all around,  
Where once there was laughter,  
Now there are tears, bringing to reality  
Our worst of fears.

No longer standing over our city  
A beautiful sight, now such a pity,  
Still so remembered after a year,  
The loss of loved ones still so clear.  
And as long as we remember  
September 11, that dreadful day,  
America will stand united, never to stray.

*Melissa Bartley*

## A "FOUND" WEEKEND

Founder's Day celebration was my first significant event that I attended in Ohio. Akron, Ohio, is the birthplace of Alcoholics Anonymous. Thousands gather in this city from all parts of the United States and other countries to celebrate and honor the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, Doctor Bob and Bill W. This is a three-day weekend celebration held at the University of Akron. In June, 1997, I went with my boyfriend and his sponsor to this event. I didn't know what to expect, but I was real excited about going out of town. This was something that I hadn't done in a long time. Because of my alcoholism, I wasn't able to do anything worthwhile, and I didn't want to do anything but drink.

The event starts Friday at 8:00 A.M. and runs into the night with meetings, plays, 12-step panels, and all-night discussion meetings called Alkathons. Saturday events include Al-Anon Panels (which consist of the family members of the alcoholics who suffer as well as the alcoholics).

There are bus tours to historic AA sites like St. Thomas Hospital Ignatius Hall where Dr. Bob and Bill took the third member, Bill D., to be "detoxed." We also went to the detox center at Marymount Hospital and some Sober clubs. An important stop on this tour is the Mayflower Hotel where in the lobby Bill W. made a decision to try and make contact with someone for help. Instead of drinking, he used the church directory and called a minister who put him in touch with someone from the Oxford Group, and he was on his way to recovery.

Dr. Bob's house, also known as the "Home of Miracles," was the main attraction for me. At this house, you walk up 12 steps to enter, and then you are greeted with a "Welcome home." The first time that I walked up those 12 steps and went into the house, my heart started beating and pounding so fast that I started sweating, and I broke down and cried. I couldn't believe that I was really there. My boyfriend, who is

now my husband, held me and assured me it was okay. Wiping my tears away, he told me that he understood exactly how I felt. I said to him that I couldn't believe that a drunk like me, a person whose life had no meaning at one time, was there in such a wonderful place.

Once I was inside the house, I looked around at all of the old furniture. In the kitchen, the coffee pot that was used when Dr. Bob and Bill were putting the 12 Step program together was still there. Also, there were pictures of everyone who had had a hand in helping to found AA.

When I went upstairs and walked into Dr. Bob's bedroom, a great warmth rushed over me. There on his bed laid an open Bible. I got down on my knees and prayed, thanking God for Dr. Bob, Bill W., and all of the others for starting such a God-given program like Alcoholics Anonymous. I thanked Him for removing me from the streets and from the bondage of alcohol and for showing me that I can live a happy, joyous, and free life, living life on life's terms *One Day At A Time*. That night came the "big speaker meeting," which was also exciting to me. Finally, there were dances which concluded the Saturday program.

On Sunday morning at 7:30 A.M. there was a motorcade to Dr. Bob and his wife Annie's burial site, where there was a Memorial Tribute. Afterwards, we went back to the University for a spiritual closing. On the way home, I closed my eyes thinking about everything I had experienced during the weekend. I felt truly blessed then and now to be a part of something so wonderful. Each year I look forward to this significant event that has such a wonderful impact on my life and thousands of others.

*God is good all the time, and all the time God is good!*

*Lillie Bargainer*

## HELPING HAND

Oh, I just can't figure out or understand  
Why a child is left without a helping hand.  
When a child is left alone  
And there's no one at home,  
His eyes are left with tears  
To face all the fears.

Although he didn't ask to be born,  
His life is now shattered and torn.  
Then he looks up to the sky  
And asks, "God, why do I  
Have to face this world alone?  
Did I do something wrong?"  
Then God answers his prayers  
By sending an angel there  
Letting him know that he is now in Jesus' care.

Oh, I just can't figure out or understand  
Why a child is left without a helping hand.  
Then he looks up toward the sky,  
He says, "Thank you, God! I'm alive.  
I knew You would come for me.  
'Cause I just couldn't figure out or understand  
Why I was left without a helping hand."

*Carolyn Clark*

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A HOMELESS PERSON IS NOT A FACELESS PERSON

Have you ever taken the time to look around  
As you're walking down the street?  
Have you seen the many faces of the  
People you could meet?

They come in all shapes and colors,  
Some black, some white, some young, some old  
All trying hard to stay warm in the cold.

Some will still try and smile,  
Trying hard to keep their own style.  
They will shake your hand if only you try,  
But if you take a look into their eyes,  
You will see their cry of help and need,  
Wanting to feed their children, their neighbor,  
Or a friend.

At the end of an alley, standing in the cold,  
I see a young girl eating someone else's mold  
Picked from the trash still covered in ash.  
It's better than nothing she says with a cringe.  
Oh, what it would be like to be able to binge  
On hot steaks and wine, potatoes and bread.  
Oh, what a feast it would be, even if only in my head.

The children they amaze me still, so full of glow  
Even as their box beds fill up with snow.  
They play in the streets with nothing to eat,  
And their toys, though empty cans, are still pretty neat.  
I wish I could help them as I start to cry.  
We could if each of us gives it a try.  
A smile, a handshake, a dollar, a meal  
Giving is easy as long as you feel.

So, as we sit in our warm homes tonight  
With more than enough to eat  
And we're watching *Survivor* on TV and  
thinking that's neat,  
Try hard not to forget the survivors  
Living in the street.

*Tracy Miller*



## HIDING FROM DYSLEXIA

All my life I have hid from Dyslexia and was very ashamed of it. I thought I would never find the help I needed. I remember the doctor at my kindergarten eye examination. I will never forget the look on his face as he tried to figure out if I had a problem with my eyes or just could not read the eye chart. You see, when you have Dyslexia the E's get turned around and it's hard to read a simple eye chart.

In the first grade I was tested for Dyslexia. Since it is inherited and my father could not read or write, it was no surprise I was diagnosed with it also. In elementary and middle school I was put in learning disabilities classes. Unfortunately, the classes did not focus on phonics, which is the key to helping someone with L.D., and I fell further behind. I resented the label "learning disability" and refused to be in the L.D. classes in high school, so I was put in the general education classes. I was terrified of being called on to read out loud or write on the chalkboard. I hid and did what I could to get by.

The only thing that saved me in school was sports. I was a decent runner and track was something I could look forward to.

Graduation was a difficult time and my future seemed limited because I was not able to read and write well. I was so good at hiding my Dyslexia that not too many people knew and just assumed I was going to college.

After high school I worked every minimum wage job in town and partied way too much on the weekends. My parents were getting tired of my lifestyle. I was going nowhere fast. They sat me down and told me, "You need a skill." Since they didn't know what else to do with me, they

dropped me off at beauty school kicking and screaming. To this day I have no idea how I passed my state board examination, but I did.

I became a hair stylist mainly because it was a career I could handle. I was good at it and felt comfortable with the public. I worked for twelve years as a stylist, married a wonderful man and had two beautiful children. I fooled myself into thinking I had it all, but I was wrong.

I did the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. I walked into the Warder Literacy Center. They first tested my reading skills. I was surprised and pleased to learn that I had an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level and tested out of the reading program. However, my spelling was at a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level. The center matched me with an excellent tutor who has helped me so much. In one year my spelling score has raised two whole levels.

I feel my life has taken on a new direction. I no longer style hair. Instead I coach 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls basketball and I love it! I feel it is my calling. In the off-season I stay home with my children, which I think is the greatest job in the world.

I want to thank all the people at the Literacy Center for giving me the help I desperately needed. The center does make a difference in the lives of people. I have learned that Dyslexia will always be a part of me but it is not who I am. I will never again hide from the fear of being dyslexic.

*Lisa Holmes*

## THE SKIES OF DARKNESS

The skies of darkness,  
Do we not fear?  
Look all around us,  
The terror is here.

The skies of darkness,  
Do we not hate?  
Many lives lost  
As if we were bait.

The skies of darkness,  
Do we not mourn?  
Twin tower collapse,  
And now it's a war.

The skies of darkness,  
Do we not care?  
The world is crying,  
It doesn't seem fair.

The skies of darkness,  
Do we not anger?  
Look what they've done,  
We are in great danger.

The skies of darkness,  
Do we not get sore?  
"Please" just stop!  
I can't take anymore.

*Crystal Csuhra*

READ

**R**epeat many times the pronunciation

**E**xpect to understand more English every day

**A**lways I have to watch English programs on T.V.

**D**edication is the best way to learn English

*Fernando Negrete*

## MY ISLAND

Long time ago  
There lived in the West Indies of islands  
He name Pablo  
Come from in West Indies  
He poor, got no money  
No food, no light  
He going to the city.

*Sheyla Caraballo*

