

Beginnings VII

A PUBLICATION OF ADULT STUDENT WRITING OF THE

Ohio Writers' Conference

OHIO LITERACY RESOURCE CENTER

Foreword

Life's experiences are *rich*. Sometimes they are cumbersome, tragic, and devastating. Sometimes they encompass vivid memories that foster visual images in our minds that last forever. Often there are occurrences that we have never shared, but ones that we truly want the world to know. Such are the samplings of life experiences that you will read in this publication.

Welcome to *Beginnings VII* – the 7th annual publication of Ohio adult student writers. Here you will read reflective essays, poetry, and stories that demonstrate the power of words. First, the authors share viewpoints about the world in which we live; next, the writers offer tributes to various people in their lives, including family members and teachers; the third section captures issues of self-esteem in which the authors often write about situations that involve self-worth; and in the final section, you will read about powerful turning points in the lives of the writers.

In addition, for the second year, we celebrate the artistic talent of ABLE students in Ohio. Miguel Calderon created our cover illustration and the Honorable Mention page features artwork by Crystal Bolin. Both students attend Live Oaks ABLE in Cincinnati.

The authors of *Beginnings VII* and their teachers were honored during the 7th Annual Ohio Writers' Conference on May 21, 2004. The conference was held at the Wyndham Dublin Hotel in Columbus and was sponsored by the Ohio Literacy Resource Center. This year's celebration featured keynote speaker and renowned author Crystal Wilson Harris and award-winning storyteller Lyn Ford. Both speakers

shared thought-provoking ideas and entertainment regarding the power of words.

We acknowledge the writers who submitted entries that we were unable to publish; they are listed and recognized in the Honorable Mention section of this publication. This year we are pleased to say that we received well over 350 entries, and we thank all of the writers and teachers for their *outstanding* commitment to the writing process! We highly commend their efforts, creativity, and dedication to capturing words, thoughts, and ideas on paper, as well as their willingness to share their written products with us. We encourage all adult students to submit their original and powerful words next year.

The OLRC also recognizes and thanks the Ohio Department of Education – Adult Basic and Literacy Education Office, particularly State Director Denise Pottmeyer, for the continued support provided for this ever-growing project. We also thank the many hands and eyes that worked to review and select the best writings among all those submissions received.

We all experience life in different ways. The authors of *Beginnings VII* share their lives in creative ways in this publication. As you enjoy these sometimes humorous, often tragic, and frequently poignant submissions, we invite you to reflect on the ways in which the authors have used the power of words to craft their work.

Chris McKeon
2004 Conference Organizer