

Teacher to Teacher

039-0300-0031

May 2003

Using *Beginnings* to Promote ABLE Programs and Student Success

Marty Ropog



The Ohio Literacy Resource Center's *Beginnings* series of adult student writing is a powerful and concrete demonstration of the capabilities and skills of ABLE students. These collections of fiction, poetry, and personal reflections are designed to be shared with others and can be used to inform, teach, and inspire others not familiar with ABLE programs and their students. *Beginnings* publications also encourage and provide reinforcement to those who already know about and support the good work being done in your program. Many of the pieces provide insight into the experiences of students and offer stories of lives changed through attendance in ABLE programs.

Beginnings showcases the academic skill, creativity, and talent of ABLE students and demonstrates the instructional expertise of ABLE teachers. For those unfamiliar with ABLE programs, the real abilities and lives of ABLE students may challenge any number of preconceived notions they might have.

Recruitment Tool

During registration, orientation, or assessment, provide copies of *Beginnings* for students to read if they have to wait for a teacher or counselor. The adult-oriented format and themes may help reinforce the idea that classes and instructional material will be delivered at a maturity level designed for adults. They may read something that provides a parallel to their own lives or see their own emotions, fears, and joys reflected in the writing. Place stickers with your program's services, hours, and contact information on copies of *Beginnings* and ask local agencies, hospitals, and doctor's offices to provide them along with other reading material in their waiting areas.

Public Relations Tool

Deliver a copy of *Beginnings* to your local newspaper along with information on your program; if your program has had a writer accepted for publication, include the press release that is available on the OLRC website along with the student's bio and picture. The successes of ABLE students are great human interest stories and a student's being published in *Beginnings* would be good way to introduce your program to your local television or radio station. Contact the station and ask for the contact information of a segment editor and then send him or her a copy of the book along with the student's bio and picture. Regardless of which medium you choose, if you haven't heard back from an editor or reporter within two weeks, follow up with a phone call asking if they've received the material, whether they have any questions, and whether they'd be interested in visiting your program or if they need additional information.

Be sure to include information about *Beginnings* in your

program's newsletter and if your district or agency has a system-wide publication, submit an article to be included.

Community Leaders and Policy Makers

Copies of books may be sent to people who have leadership positions in local communities. School district superintendents, mayors, and business leaders, as well as members of local school boards, advisory councils, area library boards, and city councils would be able to see the abilities of ABLE students. Even if your program does not have a *Beginnings* author, the writers are representative of students who attend ABLE programs every day. An introductory letter delivered with the book should provide information on your program and how staff and students work within the community.

A copy sent or delivered to the offices of local, state, and federal legislators would provide evidence of the positive influence ABLE programs can have on the academic and personal lives of their students, as well as showcase ABLE students' creativity and ability to produce high-quality writing. Send a copy of *Beginnings* along with a personalized letter introducing your program and include the success stories of two or three of your students. If your program has a *Beginnings* author you may want to ask him or her to provide a personal autograph on the cover page or on the page that contains their writing. Local programs who share representatives or senators may want to collaborate on sending copies and introductory letters. If your program already has a solid relationship with a legislator, sending a copy with examples of students' successes shows how beneficial his or her support is and how your ABLE program provides a positive impact on the lives of those in the communities they represent.



Ohio Literacy Resource Center
Research 1 - 1100 Summit St.
Kent State University, PO Box 5190
Kent, Oh 44242-0001

#446584

Phone: (800) 765-2897, (330) 672-2007
Fax: (330) 672-4841
Email: olrc@literacy.kent.edu

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Kent, Ohio 44240
Permit No. 2