

## Acknowledgements

The book you hold in your hands represents the culmination of paths each person has walked to meet together, here, in the pages of *Beginnings XII*. These vital and original, creative writings show the heart of the ABLE students in both triumph and loss, but always with a strong spirit of perseverance. Be assured after spending some time reading the literary works within, you will leave changed in some way. This year nearly 500 entries were submitted for consideration in the Ohio Literacy Resource Center's *Beginnings XII*. All were worthwhile contributions and we bow our heads to each writer who continues to step forward and to their teachers who do not fail to encourage those steps or leaps of faith to bring them closer still to their dreams. As you read the 72 works, prepare to step into a different time, another place or new circumstance.

We are grateful to the winning artist entries. Masayuki Itaya's *One Soup, Three Bowls* was created after he thought about his country, Japan. This beautiful drawing graces the front cover of *Beginnings XII*. Artist Julie Ward shares, "My piece, *The Angel of Hope*, directly contributes to the art and literature contained in prior *Beginnings* compilations from the standpoint that hope is change for the better." Contained within the pages of this literary work runs a strong current of hope. Of equal importance is artist Cristina Ortiz's interpretation in *My Feelings, Expressions*, "I would like to write my feelings and thoughts in stories and poetry, but I cannot find good words and beautiful sentences for that. Instead, I draw a picture." We are proud to showcase a wonderful partnership of both verbal and visual representations of artistic ability.

We thank the Ohio Board of Regents State Adult Basic and Literacy Education Program for the continued support of this honorable project. We also thank the reviewers who spent innumerable hours with a quickened eye for judging and a passion for reading during the selection process for the 2009 Writers' Conference.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the ABLE teachers throughout the state of Ohio. Your encouragement and support inspire students to reach higher, go farther, and work harder to bring their dreams to fruition.

Our special thanks to the speakers who converge with us at the 2009 Ohio Writers' Conference: Award winning poet and author David Hassler, our keynote speaker; and to story-teller and long-time friend to the Writers' Conference, Lyn Ford, who shares with us her "Home-Fried Tales." We welcome this opportunity to share together *Beginnings XII*.