

## Herstory in School Settings

In July 2010, Stony Brook University's Educational Opportunity Program's four-week summer institute added weekly two-hour Herstory classes for the entire entering class of 120 students, bringing in Herstory facilitators to teach the sections along with faculty and staff trained in the Herstory method. The project will be presented as a model at the statewide Educational Opportunity Program conference in spring of 2011.

With each school tailoring our curriculum to fit its own needs, SUNY Old Westbury offers Herstory's "Our Story" workshops through their Community Action, Learning and Leadership Program for Change (CALL for Change) and First Year Experience Programs. C.W. Post offers targeted readings by Herstory writers, while a professor at St. John's University studied the approach to bring a model targeted to students of sociology to 100 students in three classes. St. Joseph's College brought together its students and women from a small village in Nicaragua in Herstory's first international workshop, while through the Latino Teacher's Association of Long Island, in the fall of 2010 the Mulligan Intermediate School in Central Islip brings together Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish-speaking fifth graders interested in writing, with the goal of building bridges of understanding and youth mentoring.

While Herstory continues to work primarily with women and girls, our work in the schools includes young men and male faculty members as well.

*Founded in 1996, Herstory Writers Workshop provides opportunities through guided memoir writing that empower women from all walks of life (regardless of age, race, religion, financial status or sexual orientation, whether incarcerated or free) to turn their intimate stories into works of art crafted so that others can hear. Herstory is committed to providing an environment of intensive instruction which, in addition to creating literary works, upholds our values of empathy, inclusiveness, self-guided healing, safety and the search for social change in the expression of voices that historically have been most profoundly silenced.*

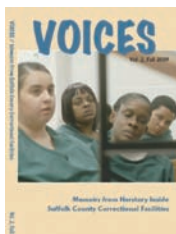
		Per session	Total
Journeys to Justice/ Windows into Our Lives — four-week mini course	2 hours per week for 4 weeks	\$200	\$800
Memoir as an Act of Witness/ single workshop for larger audiences	2 hours	\$300	\$300
Train-the-Trainers/six-week series	2.5 hours per week for six weeks	\$250	\$1,500
Train-the-Trainers/day-long or two half-day retreats	7 hours	\$1,350	\$1,350
Meet a Holocaust Writer	Up to 5 classroom visits on a single day	\$300	\$300
Bridges out of Incarceration, Immigration and Job Equity — Group Readings	Large assembly plus up to 2 classroom visits	\$500	\$500

## Publications for Use in the Schools



**Paper Stranger: Shaping Stories in Community** provides an innovative tool-kit for students and teachers. Writing excerpts that cut across race, class, culture, and skills levels make it an inspirational anthology for classroom use, while a special four-week course for younger writers links the mastery of narrative techniques with new tools for compassion, social action and tolerance.

**Voices: Memoirs from Herstory Inside Suffolk County's Correctional Facilities, Volume 2** gives a face to the women and teenage girls who find themselves in jail. Highly readable real-life stories, intermingled with factual passages and letters, serve as a classroom text for students of criminology, women's studies, sociology and law, while giving younger readers a view of the forces of racism, violence against women, poverty and addiction that affect decisions around incarceration.



**The Teller in the Tale: A Half-Jewish Child in Nazi Germany**, by Elizabeth Heyn, is a coming-of-age and escape story, rich in the details of everyday life for one who falls between the cracks during a time of great danger. A book certain to move young people who find themselves struggling to belong—and to inspire their own explorations of their lives. Accessible to intermediate and high school readers, as well as college students.

**Latinas Write/Escriben: Volumes One and Two** shed light on what happens to so many immigrant women and girls, in a special bilingual magazine format, make compelling classroom readings, while opening up discussions that foster a new understanding of issues and celebrations of lives.



**To bring "Journeys to Justice" to your school, along with training workshops for your faculty and staff, please contact us at 631-676-7395 or [contactus@herstorywriters.org](mailto:contactus@herstorywriters.org)**



*"Short of air, water and food, I can't think of anything that's more important than being able to tell our stories, to be heard, and to hear the stories of people around us. In some original cultures, a person who is ill is told, 'You've lost your song' or 'You've lost your story.' Your project is helping women and girls toward health and community."*

— From Gloria Steinem to Herstory Writers Workshop

## Passing Along the Dare to Care: Journeys to Justice



### Mini-Courses for Students

### Train-the-Trainer Workshops for Faculty and Staff

### Publications and Readings

A comprehensive new technique, with complete literature and syllabi, based on an exploration of what allows a stranger to enter one's story with compassion and care

Effectively piloted in high school, college and university settings

Available in English, Spanish and bilingual models



[www.herstorywriters.org](http://www.herstorywriters.org)

## *Journeys to Justice: Windows into our Lives*

A complete four-week course, during which students build on an opening page of a memoir that dares a reading stranger to care, opening into larger issues and themes

- **Week One: Passing Along the Dare to Care: Finding your Page One Moment.** Readings include a young girl's return to an orphanage in India where she was put up for adoption, a Native American girl's learning some of her father's secrets, and three immigration stories written by students at SUNY Old Westbury.
- **Week Two: Catching Moments of Awareness on the Page.** Readings take students from first discoveries of racism, to coming to terms with the sale of a sister in Korea, through the story of a half-Jewish child growing up in Nazi Germany and finally into stories about the early deaths of parents from three different cultures.
- **Week Three: Letting your Story Make a Difference.** Readings include the story of a girl with a felony record trying to get a job and a piece for Marcelo Lucero, the Ecuadorian immigrant who was murdered in Patchogue in November of 2008.
- **Week Four: Finding your Larger Agenda.** Helps students to consolidate their writing journeys as they assemble the pieces of the memoir they have written



*"This complete writing course is unlike any program I have seen in my long career as English teacher and administrator. It is not a recipe book for one-size-fits-all formulaic writing, but an authentic guide on how to give structure to feelings and experiences. This writing program would be a perfect springboard for creating outstanding college admission essays and other memoirs that inform the writer and engage the reader."*

—Nina Wolff, founding director of Ethnic Pen, a nationally recognized student writers' conference hosted by Bay Shore Schools and attended annually by 1000 students and teachers from across Long Island

## *Professional Development*

### **Beyond Journaling: New Approaches to Personal Writing in the Classroom**

A six week hands-on immersion in Herstory's compassion-based methodology provides teachers, guidance counselors and support staff with a working knowledge of how to help students transform their personal stories into powerful memoirs. Taught by Herstory founder and artistic director, Erika Duncan, with accompanying exercises in how to use our materials in the classroom.

- **Week One: Guided Opening Moments.** Teachers begin their own memoir-writing journeys with a practice session illuminating strategic storytelling choices and listening techniques, with the goal of bringing these techniques to their students.
- **Week Two: If You Were the Puppeteer.** Transforming the privately told story into a narrative that will work for a reading stranger.
- **Week Three:** Moving the writing forward by teaching students how to link the pieces.
- **Week Four: Crossing Borders through our Tales.** Techniques to help students write for readers whose experiences might be very different from their own.
- **Week Five: Revelation and Pain.** Boundaries and supportive choices to protect students' vulnerability, while allowing opportunities to tell stories that they want to tell.
- **Week Six: Effectively Using the Group.** Participants will be helped to apply the methodology to their own classroom and disciplinary needs.

**Participants will continue to develop their own memoirs throughout the six weeks. Further individual and group supervision and training may be arranged.**



*"There are many charismatic teachers, but Erika Duncan is one of the few who can deconstruct and articulate their methods. Her manual Paper Stranger effectively demonstrates the methodology to teach compassion-based listening and story construction. The tools Erika Duncan has developed are dynamic and versatile, and are based on the simple challenge – to shape each piece of your story so that the reader will care. This book will act as a complete kit for teachers looking for something new because it is a passionate testimonial to the power of well-crafted stories. It is a unique handbook and tool for empowerment!"*

—Erin Gruwell  
Author of Freedom Writers Diary

## *Special Presentations*

### **Memoir as an Act of Witness**

Designed to be presented to large audiences, this workshop helps students pinpoint the moments when they became aware of injustice in their lives. Through creation of scenes designed to dare a reading stranger to walk in their shoes, students learn how writing can be used to fight hatred and discrimination, celebrating roots, history, aspirations and dreams. Spanish, English or bilingual model presentations—as well as multi-session residencies with smaller break-out sessions—available.

### **Outsider Stories: Meet a Holocaust Writer**

Author Elizabeth Heyn shares her growing up as a half-Jewish child in Nazi Germany, her miraculous late escape leading to her coming of age as a refugee in Franco's Spain, and finally to trying to become a typical American teenager. Rich in drama of everyday life for one who falls between the cracks, her book fosters lively discussions of displacement, injustice and survival in an outsider role. Classroom visits and student book club opportunities are offered.

### **Bridges out of Incarceration**

Readings, classroom forums and larger assembly appearances by women and teen girls who began their memoir-writing journeys in jail help students who will be our future decision makers to study societal forces that lead to violence passed on over generation, imprisonment and despair, while opening the door to how writing one's story can effect changes, creating second chances and alternatives to incarceration. *Voices*, Herstory's collection of prison writings, has been used as a text at St. John's University and SUNY Old Westbury and forms the basis for moving reading in colleges and schools all over Long Island.

### **Writing for Immigrants' Rights and Job Equity**

Readings and classroom presentation from Herstory's Latina program and stories from a collaboration with the Women on the Job Project of Long Island Fund for Women & Girls heighten the theme of extending the dare to care and letting your story make a difference. Available in Spanish, English and bilingual programs.

*Herstory*  
WRITERS WORKSHOP

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