



A Community Memoir-Writing Project for Women

named 2010 Organization of the Year
by Long Island Women's Agenda (LIWA)

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750 Free Copies of *Passing Along the Dare to Care: A Mini-Memoir Course for Younger Writers* available for use in school and community settings in a limited edition underwritten by the Office of Suffolk County Legislator Vivian Vilorio-Fisher.

March, 2011 (Centereach, NY) – Thanks to a generous member item grant underwriting the printing of 750 copies, Herstory Writers Workshop is able to provide teachers and community youth group leaders working in Suffolk County with a limited number of free copies of the innovative memoir-writing manual and reader that was piloted during the summer of 2010 with 127 Educational Opportunity Program students from 80 different countries at Stony Brook University as a complete four-week curriculum.

This innovative “Dare to Care” approach to narrative techniques is currently being used by a consortium of seven contracted agencies of the Nassau County Youth Board, with SUNY Old Westbury’s “Immigration/Students’ Rights” and “Writing for Restorative Justice and Racial Equality” projects, by the Bridge Program of Farmingdale State College’s Educational Opportunity Center, and at Mulligan Intermediate School in Central Islip. New spring semester and ongoing programs will be starting at Patchogue/Medford High School, through the ESL Program at Suffolk County Community College, and through the PINS Diversion Program in Nassau County.

If you have an interest in trying out this curriculum, whether in a formal classroom or in an alternative community-based setting, please write to us with a short description of the program for which you think it might be a good a good match, along with the number of copies you would need.

This very original treatment of the study of narrative structures, based on what causes a “Stranger/Reader” to care, fosters dialogues across differences, diversity studies and a sense of community, as well as enhanced listening, reading and narrative skills.

“This complete writing course is unlike any program I have seen in my long career as English teacher and administrator,” writes 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.

“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.”

Gloria Steinem recently wrote to Herstory Writers Workshop:

“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.”

While Herstory has worked primarily with women and girls, its work in the schools and training program includes male students and faculty members as well.

The complete four-week course outlined in this 81-page workbook takes students on a journey of self-discovery, even while it dares them to let their stories make a difference. Warm up exercises hone writing skills and the capacity to think holistically about the writing process, while sidebar meditations shed light on a wide variety of writing techniques, while leading into larger issues and themes, allowing students at all levels to build their stories in community side by side.

- **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 finding out 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 three 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 tragically murdered in Patchogue in November of 2008.
- **Week Four: Finding Your Larger Agenda.** Helps students to consolidate their writing journeys, as they put the pieces of the memoir they have written together and share their visions of where it might go next, should they be inspired to continue to write.

Erin Gruwell, author of Freedom Writers Diary, writes:

“There are many charismatic teachers, but Erika Duncan is one of the few who can deconstruct and articulate their methods. Her manual *Paper Stranger: Shaping Stories in Community* 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!”

For information about Herstory's offerings in the schools and the community and other publications, call 631-676-7395 or email contactus@herstorywriters.org.

Passing Along the Dare to Care normally retails for \$14.95 per copy.