

This program is needed strongly
during these economic times
where people do not have the
means to pay for this type of help.
Kudos to you for a job well done!

WeWrite Volunteer
Spring 2009



www.open-books.org



Creative and Professional
Writing Workshops
For Adults and Teens

Presented by



Chicago Stories



Stories and Works in Progress by
Open Books' WeWrite Students
February-March 2009

Annie Turkin

Food

Lunch Bunch. Cooking for twelve twice a month sounded like a rather manageable feat when I signed up for this crazy adventure. I mean: cook twice and get a free lunch the rest of the month, sounds like a good deal. However, that old adage came true: there's no such thing as a free lunch.

For starters, can these people you have entrusted with your gastronomical satisfaction even cook? More often than not the answer is yes. Sweet and savory crepes, stuffed peppers with feta, couscous and lamb, corn chowder, banana cake, Pad Thai. Nevertheless, when you meet with the food on the off days, it tends to outshine the good. Curried llama, a strange concoction encased in a cold Pillsbury crescent roll, crunchy jambalaya vegetables with a side of Orzo. Some dishes make you question your faith in your colleagues. Especially when the head of I.L.R. presents you with a suspicious meal. Rather than fire us, is she attempting to kill us?

Secondly, a shared meal implies food, friends and conversation. This belief blissfully comes true quite often. However, occasionally you'll run head-on into mind-numbing conversation about water bottles. Eating in your cramped cubicle seems like a more appealing alternative under these conditions.

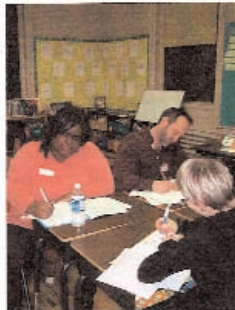
I know I harp on the bad aspects of the phenomenon known as lunch bunch, but it's because tomorrow is my day to cook.



Madelyn

How and will you stop the war while in your presidency? Many innocent people are dying for what reason? Are we fighting for oil or are we fighting for a country that does not even want us there? This war that we are in sounds to me like there was a personal vendetta with our former president and Saddam Hussein. I feel that there is so much money being spent on so much bloodshed, instead of it being spent on things of greater benefit, like health insurance, jobs, and education here in the U.S. We are in such an economic crisis that it has become scary. Unemployment has reached an all time high. There are so many people losing their homes due to this meltdown. Have you thought about how much crime will start up if this continues? I know for certain that these are things you already know about, but how long will it be before anything actually gets done? Will it take you one term, or two? There is so much money being misused by the politicians, and I think you should intervene. Please bring our troops home--- I mean all of them!

Thank you,
Madelyn



Welcome to the wonderful world of Open Books!

We would love to bring **WeWrite**, our writing program for adults, to your community.

Read on for all the details on how it works and how to become a sponsor site!





OPEN BOOKS

is a nonprofit social venture that operates an extraordinary bookstore, provides community programs, and mobilizes passionate volunteers to promote literacy in Chicago and beyond.

We enrich lives through reading, writing, and the **SHARED** power of used books.



WHAT IS WeWrite?

WEWRITE is an **inspiring, unforgettable series of writing workshops for adults.** The curriculum contains two components: creative writing and professional writing. WeWrite sponsor sites may choose to focus on creative topics such as memoir, poetry, and journaling, career-related writing skills such as resumes, cover letters, and e-mail communication, or a combination of both.

In the end, Open Books publishes booklets (or chapbooks) of WeWriters' creative work, and participants leave professional-writing sessions with strong resumes and valuable tips for forging ahead into the workforce.



Who Is WeWrite FOR?

WeWrite works well with **people of all ages and backgrounds** and can be especially helpful to:

- **Immigrants and ESL students** who benefit from lessons on what U.S. employers look for from job applicants and get a confidence boost from practicing English speaking and writing in a supportive environment
- **Teens and adults from underserved populations** such as the homeless, disabled, or elderly, whose self-esteem is boosted by the opportunity to tell their stories and work with encouraging coaches.



Why Is WeWrite NEEDED?

From experienced writers to new English speakers, WeWrite participants become **personally and professionally empowered!**

Trained facilitators and writing coaches from Open Books will help members of your community tell their life stories, improve their professional documents for a job search or professional advancement, and much more.

In winter 2009, **100% of WeWrite participants and coaches said they would participate again and recommend the program to others.**



The program length was perfect — each week was filled with **useful and informative** writing techniques. This was an **excellent** program. The atmosphere was always **positive and energetic**.

**WeWrite Student
Spring 2009**



How Does WeWrite **WORK?**

WeWrite can be tailored to fit the needs of a community.

Locations: Potential sites include schools, community centers, shelters, fellow nonprofits, businesses, churches and faith groups, senior centers, and more.

Schedule: WeWrite may be held on evenings, weekends, or during the day, depending on the site's needs and Open Books' availability.

Participants: The site may open the class exclusively to its students, members, or residents, or may choose to promote the program to the public. Teenagers are also welcome to participate, if the site chooses.

Technology: If a site chooses to include the professional writing component of WeWrite, it will need to provide computers and Internet access.

Cost: The sponsoring site may choose whether to offer the program for free or to charge participants.

This was an **amazing experience!** I was totally blown away by the amount of improvement my student made in just 6 weeks!

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What Does WeWrite **COST?**

Open Books commits to covering the majority of WeWrite's program cost.

For **12 two-hour sessions**, sponsoring sites are asked to contribute a stipend of **\$2,500** (about 1/3 of the actual program cost).

For **1 three-hour workshop** in resume, memoir, or poetry writing, sites are asked to contribute **\$500** (approx. 1/4 of the actual program cost). Cost of shorter or longer sessions may be negotiated.

WeWrite's cost works out to **\$104 an hour**. With a suggested class size of 20, the cost is **\$5 per participant**. By comparison, writing classes in Chicago cost an average of \$40 a session and career/life coaches charge \$75-\$250 an hour.

As a nonprofit organization, Open Books knows that times are tight. If the stipend cannot be funded by your organizational budget, you can ask participants to contribute or try using DonorsChoose.org, asking a local business or community group to sponsor the program, and/or holding a fundraiser (BBQ, bake sale, book swap, yard sale, etc.).



Get started now!

wewrite@open-books.org

312.475.1355 x116

www.open-books.org/programs

Thank you for both workshops. Through these programs I have realized that I can attempt to write even poetry!

WeWrite Student
Spring 2009



This was such a great volunteer opportunity! It had a **great balance between instructor-led work and small group work.** I felt like I really got to make a connection with participants and volunteers.

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