

The Writer's Voice *celebrates* **East End Literacy**



The First 10 Years

This book
belongs to:

The Writer's Voice

Fall, 1989

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The First 10 Years

1989 is East End Literacy's 10th Anniversary. The Writer's Voice Group decided to celebrate by making a special issue about our first ten years. We wanted people to tell us some of their favourite memories of East End, and their hopes for the future. We were especially interested in the students, tutors and staff who were around in the early years.

We decided to do interviews. We thought up the questions as a group. Sometimes we invited people to our Wednesday night meeting for an interview. Sometimes we tracked people down and went to interview them where they live or work. After four months we had learned how to do an interview really well.

We used a tape recorder. We listened to all the tapes and typed them out. We had hundreds of pages! We spent many weeks editing the interviews and stories, and working on the book design.

We made this book to celebrate our history.

We hope you enjoy it.



A Short History



of

East End Literacy

A Short History of East End Literacy

- 1978 Emily Bartlett, Selinde Krayenhoff and Barb Lampert talked to people in the east end of Toronto about the need for an adult literacy program.
- 1979 East End Literacy began in Dixon Hall. Selinde was our first staff person. We held our first tutor training.
- 1980 In June 1980 we published the first issue of *The Writer's Voice*. Jan joined the staff.
- 1981 East End Literacy moved to the Parliament Street Library House. Elaine joined the staff.
- 1982 East End Literacy published two books by learners: *My Nephew Booker Junior* by Sharon Barton, and *Eleventh Child* by Louise Tunstead. Small group classes began.
- 1983 East End Literacy Press published *Lonely Child* by Linda Beaupré. We held our first Annual General Meeting. Heather Betsy, Sally, and Elizabeth joined the staff.
- 1984 The number of student-tutor pairs grew to 67. East End Literacy Press published *I've Come A Long Way* by Marguerite Godbout.
- 1985 Students began to join the board of directors and the working committees at East End. Debbie Sims was our first student on the board. We started planning a new community literacy program in East York. Karen and Jill joined the staff.
- 1986 East End Literacy Press launched the first books in the New Start Reading Series: *New Year's 1960* by Hank Guindon, *Getting Along* by Robert Collie, and *Working Together* by the Students for Action group. 75 students were working with tutors

and in small groups. Pat, Vivian and Michael joined the staff.

1987

A new learning group began to meet four mornings a week. The board of directors, with help from students and tutors, worked on a long-range plan for East End Literacy. East End Literacy Press published *Let's Get Together*, a book about student leadership. Work began on an evaluation kit for learners. East End Literacy Press published *My Name is Rose* by Rose Doiron, in the New Start Reading Series.

1988

East End Literacy Press published *I Call it The Curse!* by the Women's Group, also in the New Start Reading Series. The Writer's Voice group published our first-ever East End Literacy Calendar. Joseph and Michele joined the staff.

1989

East End Literacy Press published *Raised Up Down South* by Lee Sheridan, the sixth book in the New Start Reading Series. The staff and Program committee designed a family literacy project. Five students joined the East End Literacy board.

East End Literacy celebrated 10 years!



One Story, Many Voices



10 Years Together

Starting Out At East End Literacy

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At the beginning we didn't know if we were going to survive. We started off small and we didn't grow too fast. We grew because we were strong. After a while, funders saw we were a good program and gave us more money. East End has helped other literacy programs get started.

I started in 1979 on the work group and I'm still here. I was on the board and the Fundraising committee until 1987, and now I'm on the Evaluation committee.

I think back on how hard it was to tell people that literacy was a problem. Now, everyone knows it's a problem. Something is being done about it. I think this is mostly because the students themselves got involved, saying "We are here and we matter."

Kari Dehli





Selinde Krayenhoff

Selinde Krayenhoff and I were community work students. We decided that literacy would be our topic for our field placement. We were shocked that so many people didn't know that a lot of adults can't read. A lot of people were graduating from high school who were illiterate. They couldn't get around the city because they couldn't read street signs.

Selinde, Barb Lampert, our fieldwork supervisor, and I were the pioneers of this program. We held meetings anyplace we could. The students met in their own homes or our home. We started out with six students. We each tutored two students. That is how we started.

The East End Literacy program gives a person a sense of self, of freedom and responsibility.

Emily Bartlett

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I think I heard of East End the year before it even started. I worked at Dixon Hall and I remember the three of them, Barbara, Emily and Selinde, came to us to spread the word that they were setting up the program. The first students came to East End through social workers. After a while it was much more word of mouth from students. The staff was Selinde and she did the tutor training. That was pretty much it.

I was part of the first tutor group. We were like guinea pigs! All the tutors met every two weeks or once a month to talk about tutoring. All of us were new at this and we fumbled along together. We didn't have any materials and had to make our own.

Lorraine Duff



The first contact I had with literacy work was when East End was at Dixon Hall in the early days. People there were talking about the issue of literacy.

I volunteered for about five years, starting in 1979. It was an exciting time because we were trying out a lot of ideas. We wanted it to be centred on the students. We asked the students, "How would you like to do this?"

The first time I got together with my student I was a bit nervous. I'd had the training sessions but it was the first time I had done anything like this. At that time there were about twenty students working with tutors.

During the time I spent volunteering at East End I saw how everybody got a chance, especially people who hadn't had many chances to express themselves. It was exciting to see how people would respond to that. People learned from each other. We were doing this together.

Steve Smith



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I was involved with East End for five years, starting in 1978. We organized the first working group, hired the first staff and then organized a board of directors. The work was done by a group of committed volunteers. Literacy was not a popular cause at all then.

East End Literacy began as a program of Dixon Hall, but it had to become a program on its own, a literacy house of the east end. When we moved to the Parliament Street Library House, Dixon Hall understood and supported us.

We were interested in student-centred learning. At first this was mostly one-to-one tutoring. We talked a lot about learning in small groups. I felt that adults with similar lives could learn from being together talking about problems. They could take actions like writing letters and speaking up.

The most interesting part of literacy work to me was much more than reading and writing. It was understanding how literacy related to peoples' lives. It's the struggle to fight for literacy as a right.

Evelyn Murialdo



The One Room Literacy Program

by Harold Smith

I started coming to East End Literacy in 1982. At that time we were at Dixon Hall. The space was much smaller than it is now, only one room about 8 feet by 8 feet.

I waited six months before I had a tutor. Her name was Martha Shepherd. She would give me homework to do and I would first print it, then write it, and then type it on a typewriter she loaned me.

I also went to a Monday night class at Central Neighbourhood House. Jan and Martha were the tutors. Depending on how many students came, the class would be divided into small groups. Sometimes at coffee breaks we would have lots of coffee but no milk and sugar. At other times we'd have milk and sugar but no coffee. We were really out of luck when the kettle wouldn't work.



I started in the Spring of 1980. I was looking for some community work. Evelyn Murialdo asked me to join the working group. I went to a meeting in the basement of Dixon Hall. Jan Kutcher, Selinde and others were there. Then I worked on the board. We were borrowing space from Dixon Hall. We had a little office that didn't have a window. It was sort of a large closet.

There were two programs, the one-to-one tutoring and The Writer's Voice. The first issue of *The Writer's Voice* was in June 1980.

I was President of the board for five years. This year I am Treasurer. Everyone on the East End Literacy board is a volunteer. That means that the community really owns the program. It took about five or six years for this to happen. It's been very exciting.

Manuel Buchwald



I heard about East End Literacy in January of 1981. It was in Dixon Hall. I met a lady named Jan Kutcher. She interviewed me and I was excited and nervous. I went to one of her house parties on Greenwood Avenue. Jan asked me if I can meet this tutor every Wednesday, and I said "Okay". My first tutor was Tamara, then I worked with Heather.

John Bickerdike



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I was surprised when I came to East End Literacy. I didn't think that I would ever have the willpower to come, but I did and I am glad! It is the best thing I have ever done.

Debble Sims

I started to work at East End in June, 1980. I didn't really set out to get involved with literacy. I heard about a job for a community literacy worker and it caught my interest. I had been a teacher and I really enjoyed teaching adults.

East End Literacy had been going for eight months at that time. There were only about 17 students. The staff person was Selinde Krayenhoff. Some of the people on the working group were from the Board of Education and the Children's Aid Society and other organizations.



People always feel comfortable at East End. Everybody is a learner. People are listened to and their experiences are appreciated and respected. The most exciting times were when I would be sitting with one of the students and they would be talking about their experiences. I would be really moved or excited or amazed at their life stories.

East End Literacy has become an important part of the community. It's a place where people know they can get help reading and writing, and that can help them find things they need in the community.

Jan Kutcher

A job came up in 1981 at East End literacy. I answered an ad in the newspaper and that's how I got started in literacy. I was there for four and a half years. It was very, very, very hard. I was the only full-time staff and Jan Kutcher worked part-time. There were a lot of things we really wanted but there was no money. We just had the back room in the library house.

We had 30 learners and tutors. Harold Smith was there and he helped me a lot. I remember I just started at East End and I was trying to sort out a pile of books in front of me and Harold was sitting across from me and he says "Don't worry Elaine, it will all get done." I will always remember that Harold was a really big support, and so was Laura Durham.

We would listen to students and try and hear what they were saying. A lot of what we did at East End in those beginning years was really good teaching. Students said what they wanted to do and that's what we did.

When I worked on the Writer's Voice with Jan Kutcher we tried to make it better for students to read. It really became successful when Sally McBeth started working on it. She gave it a lot of quality.

Elaine Gaber-Katz



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When I first became a student at East End Literacy I came for an interview. Elaine and Jan were working there and they were just hiring Angela Crichlow. I walked in one day. It must have been hectic, because Elaine had students working. She had people on the phone, and she told me to come in and sit down. She said, "I'll be with you in about 20 minutes." Then she said, "Do you know the alphabet?" And I said, "Yes." She asked, "Do you mind putting those files in order?"

Well that was really relaxing. I said to myself, "Oh yeah, this is a great organization. I want to get involved."

Patrick Dwyer



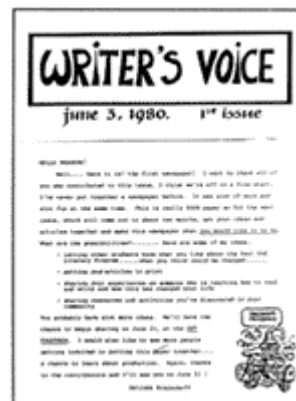
I got involved at East End through a placement with Dixon Hall. I was placed there as a secretary to get experience for my clerical work. I helped with all parts of the business and I attended a couple of board meetings.

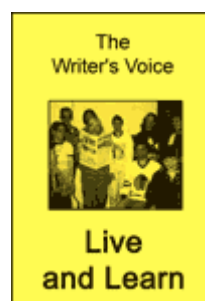
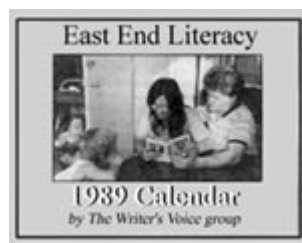
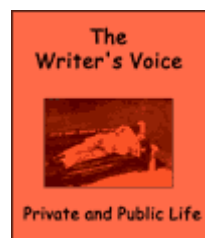
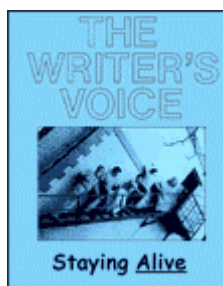
I got interested in the work with the students. Elaine and Jan talked to me about volunteering. I don't remember the exact date, maybe 1983 or early '84. I helped students put together *The Writer's Voice*. People were easy to get along with. They were eager to learn. There were some students who came in and did odd jobs around the place.

After my placement was finished I continued to volunteer. I was there about a year and a half. I still go and visit. It was friendly, very friendly. It was very easy to work there.

Angela Crichlow

The first issue of *The Writer's Voice* came out in June, 1980.





I remember Elaine was our tutor. We had about three people and we met at people's houses or whatever was central. If there was a library we would meet at a library. Elaine had the car and she said, "I'll drive you. I'll pick you up at such and such a time." We did that for two years. East End was the start of something, and if someone had something like this way back things would have been much better. How many other people were out there looking for help and never got any?

Elaine had us doing stories about anything that happened to us. Just little stories to get us writing. So one day Elaine says "Why don't you write a little book?" I said, "A book! What kind of a book?" She said, "Anything. It would be just your book and maybe someday we'll publish it." I said, "Okay."

So I got writing about my nephew and aunt. Elaine said "Have you got any photos?" So we put some pictures on it and she showed me and said, "Yeah, it looks pretty good." And that's how it got started.

Sharon Barton

I found out about East End Literacy from Maguerite Godbout. I knew Marguerite from the restaurant. My first experience was when I had my interview. I was nervous like anything!

Eileen Mullen



I saw a flyer about East End Literacy. My kids were getting older, so I had more time. I was thinking maybe it would be interesting because I love reading so much. My first experience was coming to tutor training. I have been tutoring with Writer's Voice now for about two years. The thing that struck me when I came was the atmosphere, how nice it was and how nice the staff was. I thought, "This is a place I'd like to be."

Marty Moore

I heard about East End Literacy from a friend, Brock McMaster. Brock used to come to Writer's Voice meetings. Elaine Gaber-Katz gave me my interview five years ago. I was nervous for a while. I was shy. I got over that after six months.

Robert Collie



I was hired in November 1983, along with Sally and Betsy, for a special project. I was hired to do administrative work. Our jobs were to run for just six months but we raised more money and we kept going. I was on staff for four and a half years, until May 1988.

We were always busy. There was never time enough to get everything done. The office was always crowded. We never had enough space. But it was a very relaxed and friendly place. I always enjoyed that.

I think the most exciting thing about working with the students at East End was to see the things they learned just being part of the program. It's interesting because the staff learns just as much as the students. It's an opportunity to meet and work with people from your own community.

Elizabeth Cooke



I was shy. I did not know anyone. My husband's social worker told me to come. The first time my husband, Paul, came with me. As soon as we came up the stairs, there was Betsy. Betsy asked, "Why do you want to come here?" I said, "I need help with reading and writing." Betsy said, "Okay", and she got me a tutor on the very same day. My first tutor was Connie Ross. We worked together for a long time.

Rose Doiron



I remember I was waiting for my job interview in 1983. I was really nervous because I wanted the job at East End so much. A woman was in the office typing. I asked her if she was staff and she said, "No, I'm just a tutor and a board member." Just a board member! That was Nancy Kroeker. She has worked so hard for East End Literacy over the years.

I came in to see Elaine after I was hired but I hadn't started yet. It was totally chaotic. Students and tutors were hanging around, and I didn't know which was which. It seemed like such an exciting place. And six years later, it's still an exciting place.

Betsy Alkenbrack

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I was nervous at first, then I met Vivian. She talked to me and asked me questions, such as where I live and where I work. After I got to know Vivian I wasn't shy anymore.

I worked with a tutor named Graham. He came to my house every Tuesday. Graham tutored me in math and with reading and writing. I have books in large print that makes it easier for me to read. I like math and spelling best.

Lesley Mackay



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I felt good about finding East End Literacy and learning how to read with people. The first time I came was a difficult experience, but I knew I was in the right place. My interview was interesting because the staff cared.

Leonard Watson

My First Time at East End Literacy

by Cherry Clue

I was born in Jamaica in the 1940's. I grew up with my grandmother. I was the only grandchild living with her. We were very close.

I started kindergarten when I was five years old. I loved school very much. I was doing well until I was seven, when I had to leave for primary school. At that time I was very sickly, and I was often absent from school. I feel I could blame the education system because no one ever took the time to ask what happened to me. I remember once I was out for such a long time that my teacher thought I wasn't coming back.

It was hard for me to catch up with the rest of the children. When I went to school the children would tease me. The teacher treated me like a non-learner. After a time I felt incapable of learning.

It would have been easier if I felt sorry for myself. But in spite of my problems, I have always been a fighter. I kept going and I never gave up on myself.

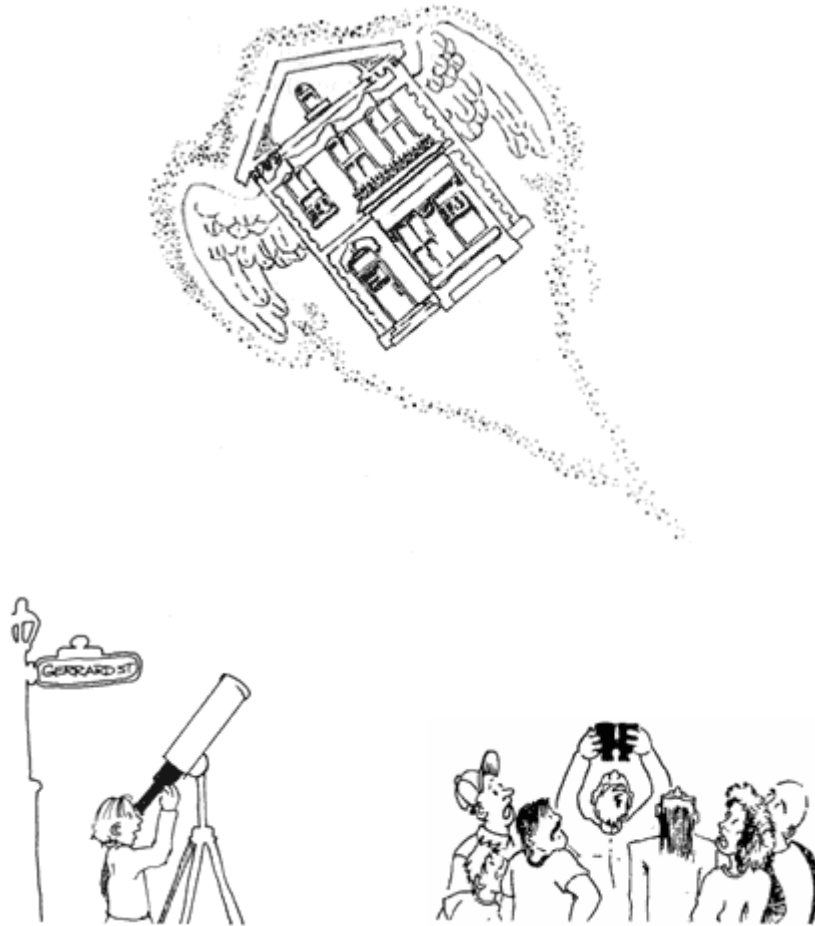
Last year I went to the City Adult Learning Centre, and I heard about a program in the east end. I phoned East End Literacy and the person on the phone sounded friendly and warm. She said that I have to make an appointment to see her. So I did, but when the date came I was scared.

I met Vivian and she was very nice. I began in 1988 but it was not working out with my tutor. I talked to one of the staff and they matched me with Donna.

In four months I was on my way, learning to read and write better. Now I am studying for my high school diploma. My children are supportive and I know that I will be able to achieve this.



Students and Tutors Working Together



Students and Tutors Working Together

We asked just three of the hundreds of student-tutor pairs to tell us about their work together.

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Marguerite Godbout and Olive Day

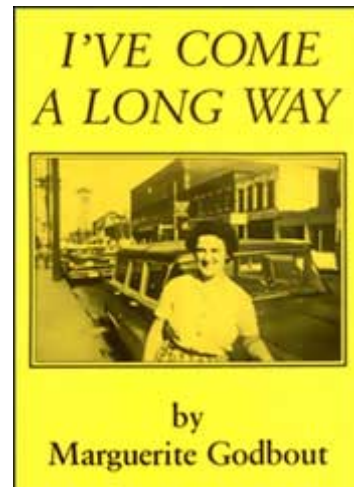
Marguerite and Olive were matched in 1983. They were together for two years, and wrote a book about Marguerite's life called *I've Come A Long Way*. East End Literacy Press published Marguerite's book in March, 1984.

CHAPTER I

I was born in Campbellton, New Brunswick at the Hotel Dieu Hospital. I was a premature seven months baby and weighed only three pounds. You could put me in a shoebox. The doctors at the hospital didn't think I was going to live. I was in an incubator for a month. I was the first born of my family. I have three brothers and sisters.

When I was six years old I had four operations to help me walk. I travelled with my dad by train to the Shriners Hospital in Montreal....

I couldn't go to school because we lived in the country and the school was too far away.



Marguerite was interviewed by TV Ontario for a program called *Lifeline to Literacy*. This program looks at adults with disabilities who are learning to read and write. Here is what Marguerite said:

There were two schools where I lived in rural New Brunswick but they were too far for me to walk. There was no transportation. I probably missed a lot not being able to walk. I wasn't able to go to school. I call it my real handicap. It's hard when you get a letter from somebody, a card, and you can't read it. That's a real handicap.

It's pretty hard to get a job with no schooling. I went to a workshop, a handicapped workshop for four years but there was no money in that. They called it "school" because you got school there one day a week. I got disappointed with it because I was reading Dick and Jane books. "I can't get interested in this," I thought. It wasn't for adults to read, it was more for children. I was 22 years old. When I left the workshop I thought going to school was over for me.

Later on I was afraid to get involved with school. It's hard to start, but once you get started you feel you can tell people you can't read and write. I'm getting better. At East End Literacy we always have someone there to help. Some days at home, I sit down at my table and write sentences down if I can remember how. If I'm relaxed and I feel like doing it, I can do it. I'm getting better all the time but it has taken a long time.

Marguerite



Marguerite



Olive

I remember going to the Sunrise Restaurant to meet my first student, Marguerite. I was very nervous. I was not a teacher, I was just someone who wanted to help another person read. Marguerite was so friendly and nice. She put me at ease and I thought to myself, "Yes, I can help her."

We met at Marguerite's apartment for two hours each week. I wasn't sure where to begin. I couldn't find any books for adults who were just beginning to read. So we experimented with word cards. We made short simple sentences. We also used flash cards. Some ideas worked for us, some didn't.

The experience stories we recorded every week were very helpful. Marguerite would tell me about something interesting she had done, a trip somewhere with family or friends. Then she would print her story in her notebook and read it to me. We had worked together for about a year and a half when Elaine suggested that I help Marguerite write her life story. We decided to use photographs from Marguerite's family album. It was an exciting project that took several weeks. One evening when we were trying to think of a title, Marguerite said "I've come a long way haven't I!" We both laughed and said, "Hey, that would make a great title for the book!"

Marguerite has since come, even further. Now she goes to day school and can read a lot better. Her book is a success too. *I've Come A Long Way* is used as a reader to help other adult learners. I'm so glad I had a small part in its creation and in helping Marguerite improve her reading skills.

Olive

Mario Pietrantonio and Ruth Wehlau

Ruth tells us about her tutoring with Mario and their interest in poetry. Mario has written a few poems for this special issue of *The Writer's Voice*. In 1990 East End Literacy Press will publish a book of Mario's poetry.

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Mario and I have been working for five years. A lot of things have happened in our lives during this time. We started out working on grammar and spelling. Then one day Mario came in with a poem he had read. He started writing his own poems, and now that's what we work on most of the time. Working with Mario has helped me understand my own ideas about poetry.

Ruth



Poetry by Mario Pietrantonio

A Room In An Old House

Looking
at the poster.
It said, "We learn
at East End."
It was just
a room in
an old house.
It was a place to
learn from people
who cared. The
freedom was ours
to come and go.
We gained knowledge by
dedicating ourselves
to better our lives.
It is a waste
not to learn
to read and write.

Friends

Friends
are forever
in this house.
Strangers are
always welcome.
How time
flies when
there is so
much to do,
in a room where
friends have been supportive
in the cause
that we are fighting for. Together we can
make a closed mind
into a free butterfly
that spreads its wings
to freedom.

Lee Sheridan and Betsy Alkenbrack

Lee and Betsy have worked together for 4 years. Lee also comes to the Drop-in, and writes stories for The Writer's Voice. This year Lee and Betsy worked on Lee's book. *Raised Up Down South* published by East End Literacy Press.

Interview with Lee and Betsy

What have you learned from working together?

Lee: It's opened up a whole new life for me. I can understand things, like street signs, that I couldn't before. My speaking is better, too. It's been like learning a new language. I enjoy myself here. People treat me more like a friend than a student.



Lee, Betsy, and Jerry Lee Miller were interviewed by The Toronto Star when we published *Raised Up Down South*. Jerry Lee made the drawings for Lee's book.

Betsy: Lee has had an amazing life, and he tells wonderful stories. I have learned about Alabama, and about the world of professional boxing. I would never have known about these things if it hadn't been for Lee. I'm also a better tutor, I think. We used Lee's own stories, sports stories, blues songs and practical stuff like application forms and cheques.

Lee: The book is about things in my life I never talked about before. It felt good to get it off my chest, to free my mind. I hope others can do that too.

Betsy: I'm really proud of it. We learned about how to make a book.

You have just published Lee's book. *Raised Up Down South*. How do you feel about that?

Lee: The book is about things in my life I never talked about before. It felt good to get it off my chest, to free my mind. I hope others can do that too.

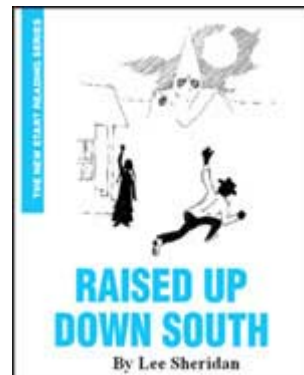
Betsy: I'm really proud of it. We learned about how to make a book.

Now what are you doing?

Betsy: We're both in a small group. It's really different from working one-to-one. I love it.

Lee: It's pretty good. I can go along a little bit, and I understand things I didn't before.

Raised Up Down South is the 6th book in the New Smart Reading Series, published by East End Literacy Press.



Our Small Groups



Tutoring with The Writer's Voice

by Marty Moore and Elisse Zack

We got together to talk about how we feel being tutors with the Writer's Voice. We talked about the difference between tutoring one student and tutoring with a group. Being a tutor with a group offers the chance to work with different people and to feel part of a group. We have also met other tutors. When you work alone with one student you often don't meet other tutors or students.



By working with many students, we have seen that different people learn in different ways. This has made us try different ways of tutoring.

Being a part of the Writer's Voice group, we have had the opportunity to learn about many topics from discussions and guest speakers. We have also had the chance to be part of *The Writer's Voice* production.

We all like to see the results of our work. Working with the Writer's Voice has given us a feeling of satisfaction. We highly recommend it for tutors who would like to work with a group.

The Parenting Group

The Parenting Group was an eight week program co-ordinated in the Spring of 1986 by Jan Kutcher. Everyone was a parent and had something to learn and something to teach. The group read children's stories and parenting books and saw movies on raising children. Everyone gave and received advice and support and at the same time improved their reading and writing.

Reading & Writing & Looking After Kids

Are you a parent or a babysitter?

There's a new group for you at East End Literacy

We'll meet for 8 weeks on Wednesday mornings
from 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

We'll talk about things like:

- eating
- bedtime
- sickness
- having fun with kids
- behaviour problems
- school



The first meeting is on Wednesday April 30
9:30 a.m.

Bring your children if you wish. There will be free
childcare.

For more information call Jan at 465-9330

Students For Action


Many students at East End Literacy wanted to learn about our organization and to be better leaders. Students For Action helped them to do this. It was started by Jill Jones and a group of students in 1985, and kept going until 1987.

Lloyd Pike was one of the founders of Students For Action.

Students For Action was a group that helped students get involved at East End Literacy. The group met once a month to discuss leadership roles, and to give students confidence in themselves. I feel that the first project, the student identification cards, made us feel good about ourselves as a group.

I felt good about helping to form the group and about being a part of it. I would like to thank all of the staff who put time and effort into Students For Action.

Lloyd

	STUDENT CARD EAST END LITERACY.
	Name: <u>Lloyd Pike</u> Address: _____

The Women's Group

We began a women's group in 1987. We hoped the group would help us develop basic readers that would be about women's lives. But the group did much more than that. It changed the way we look at liberal.

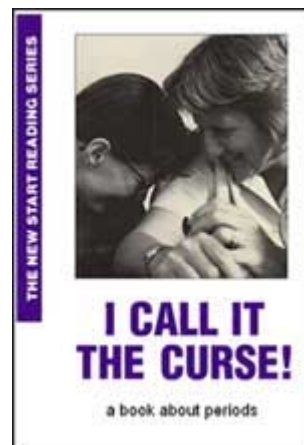
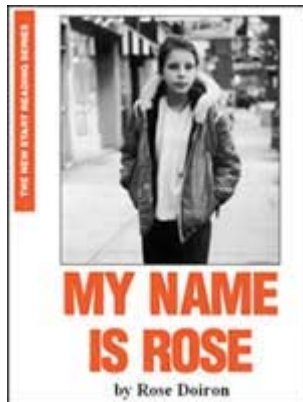
To get the group started, we phoned all the women in our program and asked them if they would like to come. Many women had children and jobs and could not come even if we offered babysitting money. We realized how hard it is for women to take part in a literacy program.

In the beginning we spent a lot of time talking and writing about our lives as women. Rose Doiron began to tell her story and her book, *My Name is Rose* was made during this time.

Many in the group wanted basic information about their bodies. We could not find any books about women's health that literacy learners could read. This is how we came to write the book, *I Call it The Curse!* a book about periods.

I went to the Ladies' Group yesterday. Someone read a story to the group. Sally made a picture on the blackboard. It was a diagram of a pregnant woman. It showed how the egg gets to the uterus. It showed how the sperm reaches the egg to make a baby. It was good to know how this happens.

Dorothy Betts, 1987



The George Brown Group

This group started in 1987 because learners were asking for two things: more time to work on reading, writing and math, and childcare while they were learning.

We got money to run a group that would meet these needs from George Brown College – so we called it the George Brown Group.

In 1987 and '88 the group met four mornings a week. Now it meets two mornings and two evenings, so students who work days can also have more learning time.

Here is what some students say about this group:

I have been going to the George Brown classes for a year. I have found them to be very helpful. They have given me the courage to go on.

Paul Snider





I like to come here all the time because it helps me to learn. When I stay off school for awhile, it is hard to get back. When I was coming all the time I felt some improvement. Sometimes I go home and I want to write because I am so excited. Sometimes I pick up the little books and I say, "Come on children, let's read!"

Leonia Hargrove

It is important to keep this group going. This group helps us to learn from each other. It keeps fear away from us, and it helps us to read to other people in our everyday life. I come to this group everyday because it helps me to go on with my learning, with reading, writing and math.

Loxley Adams

First I must say that this group is one of the most important things because it helps people learn. This group is so helpful, it gives us a chance to make a beginning. I know it is making all the difference in my life. Being in a group opens my way of learning. The group gives me a great push. It really gives me a better chance to learn.

Zalina Lowe

§

This is a poem that we read and liked in the group. It is by Langston Hughes, an American poet. The poem is called Still Here

I been scared and battered.
My hopes the wind done scattered.
 Snow has friz me,
 Sun has baked me,
Looks like between'em they done
 Tried to make me
Stop laughin', stop lovin', stop livin'
 But I don't care!
 I'm still here!

One of the students in the evening group, Sheriff Camara, changed some of the words to make a new poem:

I been so tired today
By doing hard work.
My hopes are to get a better education.
 My job has been so boring,
 Our renovation has included a heavy duty.
Look like a new extension project
 Tried to dominate my whole life.
Stop taking new contracts.
Stop playing with your employer.
Stop fooling around during the working hour.
 But I don't care!
 I'm still doing my best.

Where do we go from here?



A Look at the Future

Where do we go from here?

East End Literacy will be in a new building soon. The Parliament Street Library is planning a new building to take the place of the old Library House. We have been going to planning meetings to say what we need the new building to be like. We need more space, and we want it to be easy for people in wheelchairs to come and go.

The old Library House has become a symbol of East End Literacy. Since the old building will soon be torn down, we asked Jerry Lee Miller to draw the building in different ways. We gave Jerry Lee the ideas for the drawings you see in this book

We asked people to tell us about their hopes for the future of East End Literacy:

I hope that East End Literacy gets the funding to be able to grow. The new building will help a lot.
Literacy has to be seen as important.

Emily Bartlett

§

East End Literacy has already done a great deal to improve education for adults in Toronto. I hope you keep running the program, publishing books, teaching the community, and speaking out about the issue of literacy. You have already done so much, whatever you do next is a plus.

Evelyn Murialdo



I hope that East End Literacy Press stays really strong. I think that it's an amazing part of East End.

I would always like students to be central to East End Literacy, to have their say and be part of decision-making, and to be on the board.

I hope that East End keeps taking risks. I hope it doesn't get too organized. I hope it keeps being a special place to get an education.

Jan Kutcher



You should continue to do what you are doing. Every year more students become involved with the board of directors.

I don't think it would be good if East End got any bigger. I think it would be better to stay the same size and help other programs get started. If East End gets too big it will be like a school, which is what we don't want.

Kari Dehli

I hope that the staff and students at East End will go out to conferences and workshops and talk to lots of people about the kinds of things East End does.

There are a lot of ways to get bigger. It may be that you want to tutor more people, or you may want to influence more people. East End Literacy has done things through action. Other groups talk about involving people. East End does it.

Steve Smith

§

I would like to see us always doing new things. Right now we are making our groups better and we are making an Evaluation Kit that will help students to see their progress.

When you think about it, what does a little group like ours do about a problem as big as literacy? Are we just throwing a stone into the ocean? I think we have made a difference because we started a lot of things. A lot of people who worked at East End went on to work with other groups, and so have influenced a lot of people.

The books we have written have had a lot of value for all the other literacy groups too.

Manuel Buchwald



I don't know where East End Literacy is going in the future, but I'm sure that it will do well. It is a very strong organization. The people on the board, especially those who have been at East End a long time, are very committed. They have good advice to give on where East End should be going.

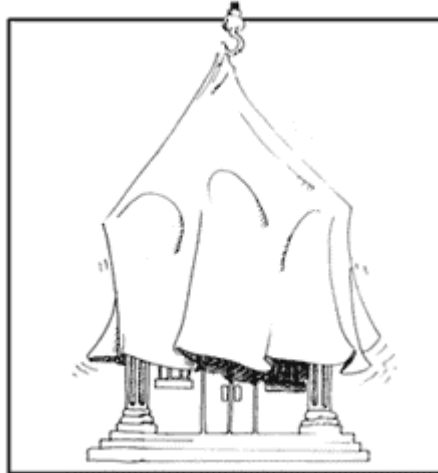
Elizabeth Cooke

§

I think East End will do Family Literacy soon. This means helping parents who want to read to their kids and who want to help them with their schoolwork. It also means helping parents to understand what's happening in the school, and to fight for their right to a good school system.

We should think about doing a project like the one being done in Ottawa at a literacy program. This project hires students in their program to be part of a work project. In the Ottawa program they have started a cleaning business. They make money and also work on the reading and writing needed for the business. This kind of project is called community economic development.

Betsy Alkenbrack



I think because of programs like East End Literacy there is a better future for people who can't read and write. There should be more literacy programs.

Robert Collie

It would be great if East End Literacy could help start new programs the way we helped start the literacy program in East York.

I would like to see East End Literacy Press get bigger and have projects that would hire and train students. This could be a community development project that would allow students to make money and learn literacy.

I would also like to see East End students helping the government to write their pamphlets in clear language.

I think the most important thing in the new building is a ramp for people who have trouble walking, or who use wheelchairs. It would be good if people could walk right in off the street and not have to use the stairs.

I wish East End Literacy had ten rooms!

Elaine Gaber-Katz



Thank You!

This book was made by The Writer's Voice group:

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The opinions expressed in The Writer's Voice belong to the adult learners who wrote them. The role of volunteers and staff is to provide technical assistance and to encourage open and informed discussion. For this special anniversary issue, The Writer's Voice has also gathered the opinions of volunteers and staff members, past and present.

We love to hear from our readers. Please write in care of:

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