

Youth Programs: Student Writers' Workshop

By Terry Mobley, T-C '91, Bevandterry@aol.com

Alex, a high school senior who had attended the SWW for 7 consecutive years, decided this year that he no longer wanted to be in the high school group as a participant. Perhaps he just couldn't bear one more mini-lesson on infusing similes and metaphors into your prose or writing more powerfully with vivid verbs. Whatever the reason, I was sorry to hear he would not be attending the Student Writers' Workshop this year. This was my seventh year as director. It wouldn't seem like the same place without Alex.

Then Alex's mom suggested that maybe Alex could work as a volunteer with the younger writers, as a teacher's assistant. It turned out to be a perfect match. Alex, a "real" writer, experienced in the ways of the Student Writers' Workshop, served as a mentor for middle schoolers under the guidance of T-Cs. It was instantaneously apparent that Alex was mature, energetic, enthusiastic and willing to do whatever was asked of him. The teachers almost fought over him. He demonstrated real leadership potential, the kind of potential that Writing Projects nurture in teachers when they bring T-Cs together in the summer to co-teach in the SWW.



Terry Mobley (center, first row) and past SWW teachers

In my seventh year, I no longer think of the SWW primarily as a place for young writers to hone their craft and feed their desires to express themselves. It certainly is that, but I also see it now as a place where teachers who care about writing can explore what it means to be a writing teacher. Weekly meetings are no longer about "administrivia" as they once were. Instead, they are an opportunity for T-Cs to share with each other the challenges and successes of their respective writing groups. Discussions with T-Cs are about what we learn from the luxury of teaching with other T-Cs in an open, non-curriculum-driven setting. Like Alex, I've begun to change the way I see my job. I no longer think that my most important function is to manage the time and space so that students are successful, but rather to encourage the kind of environment that will allow writers to help each other grow. *Editor's Note: The Student Writers' Workshop runs from July 5 through July 22, 2005. There is also a site in Frederick County.*

Youth Dreamers Need Your Help

By Kristina Berdan, T-C'99, Lizard70@aol.com

As many of you know, we have been working for three years to create a youth-run youth center for the Waverly community. Thanks to support from people like you and LOTS of work both inside and outside of the classroom, we are about to take an exciting step: purchasing the house that will be turned into our youth center!

We are blessed to have St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center as our partner to administer the \$70,000 grant from Sen. Barbara Mikulski that got this whole dream into gear. We are also blessed to have the *pro bono* services of Laura Penza, our architect, who meets with us once a month and generates drawings that match our dreams for the center. HOWEVER, we are at a crucial time when we need to find a general contractor to take these drawings and make them into a reality.

With that in mind, we are writing to all of you in case you know anyone who is connected to some of the major contractors/builders in the community. We would just like to have a connection so that we can invite these people in for a presentation to see what we have done

and see if they might consider taking on our project *pro bono*. We realize that many of these companies would love the opportunity to be involved in such a community project and get some excellent press at the same time. The trouble is getting someone here to our classroom.

We are simultaneously returning to some big foundations that were very interested in funding us, but needed us to own the house first. By doing this, we are hoping to raise the funds to hire a general contractor, if absolutely necessary. Getting a company to do *pro bono* work would be ideal since we also need to fundraise to cover operating costs to open the center. We share all of this to let you know that we are pursuing many different avenues.

If you can spread the word about our need, and will speak to someone you know, we would be so grateful! Please contact us through e-mail or call me at 410-952-7003. Look at our Web site www.youthdreamers.org to learn more about us. Youth Dreamers need your help to make our dream a reality.