

# What We Want to Tell You.



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Beginnings by Magna M. Diaz, Bilingual Librarian, Frankford High School The greatest gift a teacher can have is to have students who are eager to learn. There is nothing better than to see the spark of interest and the desire to know more. I have seen this in the eyes of my Teen Writers. When the author, Judith Kristen, called me in June of 2004, I remember wondering if I wanted to have a program so early in September of the following school year. I took a chance and booked the author. It has been one of the best decisions I ever made. Judith Kristen came in September and talked about her book "The Purple Hat Gang" and immediately connected with the students. There was magic in the air the first day of the program. Judy then offered to have a one day workshop with my students and I opened the workshop to those interested in serious writing. Sixteen students came and sat and listened and shared their writing with the author and each other. Sixteen students found a connection to one another and became friends. The students who chose to participate in the workshop were from 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. They included boys and girls and their cultural background was incredibly diverse. Half of this original group graduated in June of 2005. In September of that same year, the Teen Writers group entered a new phase. Judy came back and gave another talk to our students. This time she included her second book "Olivia Twist...a quest for the glass half-full." The teen writers not only greeted her warmly, but they asked for even more of her time. Judy saw such eagerness and so much desire in these young writers that she sat with me and we talked about preparing a lesson plan that would focus on their writing, culminating in a published book of their written work. The students included in "What We Want To Tell You" have worked very hard going through the process of writing, editing, and reviewing of their work. They also sat and listened to their peers go through the entire process and they have come back for more I am proud to say that this book is a result of all their efforts and struggles as apprentice writers. The magic of all of this is that Judy graduated from Frankford High School in 1965. She sets her books in our little 'Northwood' neighborhood of Northeast Philadelphia. She gives back her heart and soul to help our students find what has taken her so long to find. I remember smiling when I first heard her say to the group, "If your ship doesn't come in... swim out to it " And, the most incredible part of all of this is that Judy has done it all for free. Her payment is to see our students triumph in their first steps to becoming writers of the future. Magna M. Diaz November 22, 2005

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目录:

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