



Passages Press

A Sweet Tribute

Janet Larkin, who has been a Passages teacher for many years, is moving on to work on completing her novel-in-progress. That's a fact. Transitions are never easy. That's another fact. (All of you who have given birth can attest to that one). Janet is very excited to be pursuing her dream, but so sad to be leaving her students and colleagues. And we're extremely proud of her for taking a risk, while not knowing how in hell we're going to adjust to her absence. Simply put, we'll miss her. Of course, we'll meet our friend outside of school, but we'll miss her being on our Passages team, miss her laughing and crying with us, miss her unique Janetness in our little Community School world.

Over the years, Janet's students have expressed their love and admiration...

"Janet has been one of the most wonderful people that I have met in my entire life. She didn't judge me. She accepted me and was willing to help me get my education and my high school diploma. I know that I have done things very slowly at times and procrastinated quite a bit, but Janet never gave up on me at all. I just want her to know that I thank her so much from my heart for helping me along this very long path."

Stephanie Preston 2005 graduate

"Being in the Passages Program has turned out really well for me. I have an awesome teacher, her name is Janet Larkin, and she has helped me out a lot with all of the work I have had to do. She pushes me when I need a swift kick in the butt, so that I can get my work done."

Jackie Lynn Smith 2006 graduate

"If it wasn't for Janet's encouragement and way of making things interesting for me, I never could have gotten this done. When I wanted to give up she helped me through it, and when I succeeded she celebrated with me. Thank you so much Janet, you will never know how much you have helped and been an important part of my life."

Stephanie Freeman 2006 graduate

"I am thankful for having Janet as my one-to-one. She is an awesome teacher, very easy to talk to, and funny. To me, she was a teacher, counselor and a friend. I love you Janet!"

Kayla Norwood 2007 graduate

"My life has been a living nightmare. You know the ones where you are so afraid and you just want to give up and wake up, but something is stopping you. That's been my life, except every Tuesday. I get one hour when my one-to-one, Janet Larkin, is there to talk to and

help. She has been my hero - she was there while I was pregnant helping me learn how to be prepared for the good and the bad."

Natasha Ward 2007 graduate

"She has always been there for me. She would call, give me ideas, she encouraged me, she believed in me, and she never once put me down. She cared enough to be honest, but NEVER in a hurtful way."

Shelley Matthews 2008 graduate

"Janet was a good teacher and an even better friend. I could talk to her about anything and she'd listen. She'd help me and give me the best advice she could. We laughed a lot through the eight months; mostly, she laughed at me, but I had a lot of fun."

Naomi DeWalt 2010 graduate

"Special thanks to my own teacher, Janet, for all the help, patience and support you have given my family and me."

Tiphani Williams 2010 graduate

And the tributes continue to this day...

My Inspiration

by Amanda Coley

Dedicated to Janet Larkin

My Inspiration for writing my book is a loving teacher who became what I consider my friend. When I first met her I wasn't sure what I thought about her. My relationships with my teachers have been quirky. But, as I grew to know her, we bonded in a way that changed my life in a drastic way. We were able to laugh, relate, talk and enjoy each other's company. I felt like I could tell her anything

She has guided me and talked me through difficult roadblocks in my life in such a short time. When I am upset, angry, or just need to talk, she is there to laugh with me, talk to me, and give me helpful tips.

Unfortunately, she will not be my teacher anymore, for she is going on to fulfill her goal of becoming a writer. However, I will go on being her writer pal in hopes that she will be there when I need a friend.

Janet, I love you and without you I would not have seen how my outlook on life was so funny and how I can trust in someone. You are my light at the end of the tunnel that I will follow to the dear end. I wish you didn't have to leave because I will miss our visits together, but we are each a phone call away and a page away from success.

When I graduate, which I will, you will be like you are in my book - my inspiration to move forward.

A Hearty Welcome

It was a hard process to find exactly the right person to take on the role that Janet is leaving vacant. Everyone on the hiring committee agreed after meeting Heather King online and in person that she is that person.

So, Heather, tell us about yourself...

My full name is M. Heather King. I grew up in Exeter, New Hampshire. I have lived in Bedford, Pennsylvania, for the last eleven years and taught at Allegany College of Maryland for the past five years. I taught everything from English, Writing, and Speech to Remedial Reading and College English in the local high schools in the area. I've also worked as a home visitor for Head Start and I taught kindergarten in Elmira, New York. I was the keynote graduation speaker at the state prison in Pennsylvania last year. I belonged to the Allegany College of Maryland Writer's group and have a children's book published based in the Gaza Strip about a girl who grows up in a war-torn area and has to fight for the rights of females to go to school. The title is Peace of Trash.

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I am married to Cory King (an avid outdoorsman) and have two sons, twelve-year-old Dylan and nine-year-old Cade and an eight-year-old daughter, Parker. We live on Three Mile Pond in Windsor.

Why did you decide to work for the Community School?

Because I was really excited to combine teaching academics with helping students feel better about themselves.

Bonding with your Baby *the real poop*

by Katelyn Davis

When you bond and care for your baby it is pretty much the same thing. You feed, change, play with them, dress them and give them baths, read and sing to them, and mimic the baby's movements and cooing. As you do this you watch them grow and see new things that they learn from day to day, and you can't wait until they learn something new, like how to smile or laugh. And after a little bit you start to know what each different cry means. The



funny thing is, in all the years and all the new stuff we have, we still haven't found out anything really new to help to bond with your baby. If you think about it, we are doing the same things as they did

since the start of time. We just have better toys and more stuff to help them learn.

I feed, change, dress, play, sing, dance, mimic and give him baths. It's not at all like what people say before you have a baby. They don't tell you that you get peed, pooped and puked on, or that they pee out of their diapers

all up their back. or that when they start to teethe, you can't get them to stop crying or when they have gas all they want to do is have you walk them around. You buy them a bunch of toys that they can't use for a long time, so you're just stuck waiting for them to do something new and when they do, it makes you so happy.

Once you get used to everything, it's not so bad. Whatever they do, it's cute, because they're just babies.

Watching Our Baby Grow

by Jenifer Bodman

There are many different stages of development during childhood. While I was doing research I came across things I was not expecting my little girl to go through, things I would have to learn how to deal with.

I feel I can help Brailey develop emotional skills by working with her and showing her that I'm here for her at all times, that it's okay for me to leave the room because I will come back and I wouldn't leave her with someone Jake or I didn't trust. I feel like she needs to be able to connect with people other than her father or me. It's good for her in every way possible. In this time that Brailey is learning how to walk I can help her by holding her hands while encouraging her to make more steps.

Intellectually, I can improve her skills by talking to her more and encouraging her to make words or even sounds. I feel like reading to her is a great way of learning and is a great way of bonding with us as well.

My daughter Brailey turned a year old on December 6th and is growing faster than I can keep up with. Every day she does or learns something new. It's like around every corner is a new surprise for her! Since the day I brought her home from the hospital, I just couldn't wait to get to know her and to see what her

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personality was going to be like. I feel like as the months went on, Brailey's personality just kept growing stronger and stronger and it was so incredible to watch it change so fast!

I just think that every person is unique in her/his own way, like Brailey is just such a giddy and happy baby and could put a smile on your face without even trying! From the day I had her, she's just been such a happy, easy baby. Jake and I have been very blessed to have such a wonderful and healthy baby from day one. We couldn't ask for anything more!

We just keep watching her grow into a beautiful little girl! It's funny to see that she's got a little bit of both of us in her. It's just so fun to look at her and to know that we have a whole life to spend with her and care for her. We can't wait to do all kinds of things with her, like things we never got to do as children. Jake and I have kind of learned from our childhood and brought things to mind, like what we wished we could have done as a family when we were younger. All those things that we didn't get to do, we want to do with her and make her childhood a great memory to look back on!

Reading and Writing

Anna Sue Martz

To help my reading comprehension sometimes I read out loud. Sometimes hearing what I read helps me break down what I read, and go over it and think about what happened. I pick books or articles that I'm interested in.

To get a better vocabulary I ask what certain words mean, ones that I might have not heard before. While reading, if there is a word that I've never heard before I read the sentence over again and try to figure out what the word might mean given how it's used.

Well, I know to make my writing better I need to learn proper punctuation and go over

my work to make sure I spelled everything correctly. Good writing is knowing how to make your reader want to read more of your work, knowing where to put commas and periods, spelling words correctly, and capitalizing what needs to be capitalized. All of those are key things a person needs to be a great writer.

I love reading very much! I love how it takes me different places, how it can relate to me, or to someone I know. I love how it can make me mad, sad and happy, how it can make me start to cry, or make me start to laugh. I enjoy reading all different kinds of work. In many different books I thought I knew what the person telling the story was feeling. In the book You Look Too Young to be a Mom, I cried and laughed and understood exactly how the woman in that book felt. In What My Mother Doesn't Know, I related a lot to how Sophie felt and I did a lot of laughing. Bastard Out of Carolina made me cry, feel angry, and made me feel sorry and want to help every girl who has ever been hit or raped. I have read lots of books and many if not all have touched me or made me think and feel for people. Books all mean something and have some truth to them. I would recommend everybody read the books I just listed.

Joshua absolutely loves reading. He can't tell me yet, but I know he does. I can tell by the way he looks at me and at the pictures when I start to read to him. He gets really excited and reaches for the pictures. He squeals and laughs when I make different voices. He will jump up and down on my lap sometimes, too. He has two favorite books that go with us wherever we go - Mimi's Toes and My First Tractor Book. These two books are books he can put in his mouth and do anything to. They have bright colors and easy images to see. Touch and feel books are his favorite so we have quite a few of them. They're his play books. His other books are great for nighttime or when we want to just sit and relax.

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It has been more than a year since I joined Passages and over the time I have become a better writer, and I still love reading! I've read almost ten different books and each one has been wonderful. I've read some poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. I think my favorite book was Bastard Out of Carolina. Someday I hope to have my own little library!

Help is Out There

by Kayla Gardner

There is help out there for substance abusers. I have been down the road of drugs and alcohol. I have dealt with it when my brother was alive and he drank and did drugs all the time. I would always say that I would never do any of it. Well, I grew up and one day I just did it and liked it. Once is all it takes. You can go to a rehab or go to a clinic or even try to stop yourself. In order for the person to stop, they have to want the help.

I used to take oxycontin every day for two and a half years. My friend asked me if I wanted the help and I took it. I didn't like who I was becoming and neither did anyone else. I had everyone worried. They all wondered if I was going to make it another day. Well, here I stand today to tell you that I got the help. I went to a rehab, and I also went to the methadone clinic. I am now a year and a half sober with a one-year-old son and I couldn't be happier.

What a rehab does is very simple... You first detox and then you're there for 30 - 60, even up to 90 days. In rehab you do group meetings and one-on-one counseling. Sometimes a rehab can help and sometimes it doesn't. At a methadone clinic they're there to help you if you have an addiction to benzos, heroin or oxycontin. You don't detox at a clinic. You go in and do an intake - that's where they take your blood and do a urine test on you. Basically, they see your levels and decide where to start you off on methadone. You get a

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TB shot, which is a tuberculosis shot, just to make sure you don't have it. You have to complete meetings with your counselor and group meetings. You get random pee tests. If your urine test comes back clean every time, then they can set you up for take homes. Take homes are weekly. You have to have a lock box. The clinic will give you a week's worth of methadone and sometimes they will give you up to two weeks. Rehab and a methadone clinic can help. It only helps a person who wants the help in the first place.

Discovery House in Waterville is a methadone clinic and their number is 872-7272. The rehab in Lewiston is called Facing Change and its number is 784-0922. I'm glad I got the help when I needed it.

What Doesn't Kill Me Makes Me Stronger...

by Amanda Coley

"What doesn't kill me makes me stronger." That should be everyone's motto. She walks down the street, hallways of her school and in her room a different person. There's two sides to this girl: one she hides behind hoping no one will notice her secret side, and one she pushes away, tucked down behind a smile.

But what is she hiding? Who is she protecting? What is she afraid of?

Moving as a young child from her gram's Christian clutches to her mom's alternative life style was the start of her downfall. How could she change for the better when the better was left behind?

Look for more excerpts from Amanda's story in future newsletters.

Book Corner



Stitches

by David Small

reviewed by Jackie Sprowl

This book was definitely interesting, something I would not ordinarily read, but it was a nice change. It's a graphic novel – a book written in comic form. It's a memoir about a boy going through a rough life. He thought he was pretty much in the shadows, left behind. He never saw his dad that much, because he was always gone working. He was always with his mom; he never had a dad figure.

I didn't like the way his mother treated him. They were always tight on money. When he left lights on she would say, "What do you think, we're made of money?" When he had a growth on his neck, no one made him a doctor's appointment. And when they did, he had to go for two surgeries and they didn't tell him he had cancer. His grandmother was just as bad. When they stayed with her, she treated him like a dog.

His counselor was the only one that understood. He told him it wasn't his fault, that it wasn't anything he was doing, but that it was just that his mother didn't love him.

I could relate to the way he was always left in the dark by himself. My mother wasn't as bad as his, but wasn't around, which was like his dad. I used to see a therapist and really

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enjoyed going there. She gave me my backbone and told me that the things that were happening were real, it wasn't just me seeing them a certain way. It helped me. It was nice to have that special person listen, understand and empathize; friends will try to make you feel better, because they don't want to hurt you or see you upset, but with my counselor I could be me and say exactly what I needed to get out without worrying about the consequences. With David Small, his whole life changed after seeing that counselor. He was able to get his own place, make his own life as a writer and illustrator and get married.



Save these Wednesdays in
2011 from 2 - 4 pm for
workshops:

January 19th

February 16th

March 16th

