

MACOMB DAILY FEATURES/PEOPLE

One Earth Writing shows teens we are all the same



Lynne Golodner, author, entrepreneur and founder of One Earth Writing leads the discussion during a workshop at Warren Mott High School. Listening are Warren Mott student Shania Jones, at left, and Tanisha Farrell, who is a Wayne State University C2Pipeline facilitator working with Golodner.
GINA JOSEPH - THE MACOMB DAILY.

By [Gina Joseph](#), *The Macomb Daily*

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Warren Mott High School student, Shania Jones follows along in the One Earth Writing workshop.

Some people get angry when they see things they don't like, others get creative.

"I was troubled by what I saw as a growing divide in our country, between Americans not being able to understand one another," said Lynne Golodner, a Huntington Woods, author, freelance writer and founder of a public relations firm that uses a strategic mix of storytelling, relationships and higher purpose to build organizational success. "I'm also the mother of four children, three of whom are teenagers who don't see differences whereas adults do."

So, she created One Earth Writing.

Through collaborative workshops offered to schools and organizations throughout Southeast Michigan, teenagers who may not ordinarily cross paths discover things in common through their stories of love and loss, sports and food, belief and emotion, ultimately connecting them across racial, religious and socioeconomic divides. "We've brought One Earth writing programs to more than a

1,000 students so far," Golodner said.

One such student at Warren-Mott High School is Reggie Wallace, who is not only connecting with other teens but honing his writing skills.

"It's a great class," said Wallace, 17, and an eleventh-grader. "I like telling stories about people and their lives."

Shania Jones, 18, agreed.

"I'm learning how to become a better writer and about the different types of writing (poems, novels, journaling and blogging)," she said. "I feel like I can express myself more through writing."

Lisa Christenson is the site coordinator at Mott High School's C2Pipeline, a college and career readiness program that uses hands-on, project-based learning activities in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (S.T.E.M.) to engage students. As one who works with a lot of students who struggle with writing and expressing themselves, Christenson knew Golodner's program would be an asset and worked with the principal to make it part of the C2Pipeline.

Funding the work

One Earth Writing at the Movies will feature, "Freedom Writers," followed by a meet and greet with celebrated husband and wife journalists, Brian Dickerson and Laura Berman.

May 10 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Maple Theater in Bloomfield Township.

Tickets: \$25.

The Maple Theater is at 4135 West Maple Road, Bloomfield Township.

This is a fundraiser for One Earth Writing, which connects teens from different races, religious and socioeconomic origins through writing workshops.

For more information visit oneearthwriting.org

“This was our first installment but I want her to come back,” Christenson said. “I don’t think the kids saw the value in creative writing before this.”

Since taking the workshop, Christenson said many of the students are not only improving their writing skills but they’re turning their homework in on time and because they’ve learned to express themselves better, are not afraid to ask a teacher for help.

One Earth Writing has also taught the students to think outside the box.

“She lets them know, it’s okay to close their eyes and create a vision in their head and write what they see,” Christenson said. “I don’t know if it’s a tool that the kids have been given up to this point, but it works.”

One student was so inspired he wants to be a songwriter and composer.

Others who have taken the workshop enjoyed it so much they’ve asked to help, which led Golodner to create the [One Earth Ambassador program](#).

“The ambassadors are kids who love writing and want to develop their leadership skills,” Goldoner said. “Our current ambassadors have been so excited we created a senior ambassador program so they can continue in it.”

Those who wish to serve as ambassadors for the next session starting in the fall must apply by Oct. 1. Students are asked to submit a letter and sample of their writing.

“It’s a very elite program,” said Golodner, who could not be happier with what her nonprofit organization has accomplished in a year.

Even Washington likes what she’s done and recently named her a Fulbright Specialist. That means she will be included on a roster prepared by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, given to 150 countries seeking experts who can among other things deliver seminars or workshops.

“I am beyond thrilled to be a Fulbright Specialist,” Golodner said. “I believe storytelling and human connection are the answers to questions of disparity, disconnect and disunity. When we dare to put voice to feelings, experiences and dreams, and share that with others in a variety of venues we build meaningful connections that transform the world. I am honored to do this in other countries with individuals who might not otherwise have the opportunity to explore the way words can transform their lives.”

For more information, visit oneearthwriting.org.