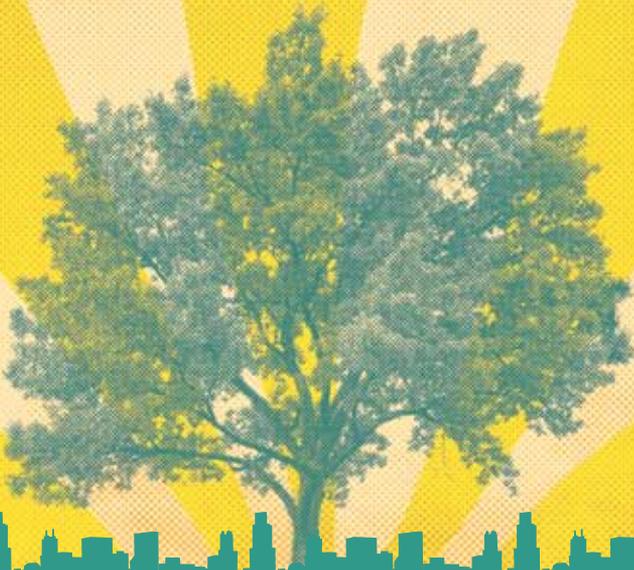


WRITERS' CIRCLE
FALL
20
09



Stories of Family & Fellowship

FROM GOLDIE'S PLACE

STORIES OF FAMILY & FELLOWSHIP

From Goldie's Place



Roberta Friend

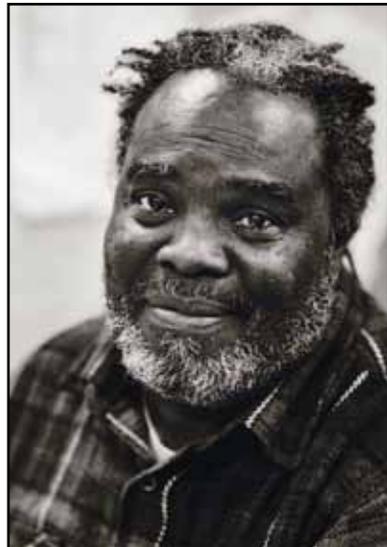
Her smile is like a magnet
Her twinkling eyes are bright as day
I never knew her but wish I did
I now work for her and her dream

When I come into work I see her there on the wall
I need to ask everyone who knew her, what was it like to know
Roberta Friend?

I know Goldie's Place was a great accomplishment in her life
Having children, being a wife
A daughter
But having the courage to care about someone else
Providing them a place to come and a chance to live their dreams
That is big FRIENDSHIP
Hats off to Roberta

**-Malvin Jeffries, Staff Member,
Goldie's Place**

Goldie's Place 



A Few Words from Goldie's Place and Literacy Works

Goldie's Place was founded on a belief in human potential and the power that resides in every one of us. In assisting people who are homeless, we strive to renew the spirit of those we serve. I know no better way to do so than by giving voice to the hopes and dreams and experience that have brought them to this point.

The essays presented here are a wonderful illustration of the beauty and character that reside in these individuals. They give us an inside look at the things that are important to them and an understanding of what is not.

Like Brian, Mavis, and Gregory, our program participants have each made a commitment to positive change in their lives. We are inspired by the resilience and persistence they demonstrate in the face of so many challenges. We recognize that we have as much to learn from them as we can hope to teach and are honored to be able to share a part of their journey.

We are grateful to Literacy Works for dedicating their time and talents in creating this Writer's Circle experience and to Andrew Collings for putting a thoughtful face on the remarkable words expressed here. And to all our participants, keep writing and keep hoping...the best is yet to come!

**Johanna Dalton
Executive Director
Goldie's Place**

Working with the writers at Goldie's Place has been such a wonderful experience. Within our small group, we had the opportunity to really get to know each other and not only share tips on writing, but also give support and friendship.

We hope this workshop will encourage the authors to continue writing and sharing their stories as they move on to the next chapter in their lives.

Special thanks go to the staff at Goldie's Place, especially Johanna Dalton, Monica Horton-Harris, and Courtney Francis. Very special thanks go to Andrew Collings for the beautiful photography and Charlene Epple for the wonderful book design.

**Alison Szopinski & Colleen McGaughey
Literacy Works**

—w—
**Writings from Goldie's Place
Writers' Circle, Fall 2009**

Mavis Annorh

Brian Hemphill

Gregory Hynes
—w—

MAVIS ANNORH



Birth of Moses Tetteh Annorh

The day I was going to give birth to my third child was something else. All that day I was feeling weird, like slight pain in my stomach. I was having contractions; my stomach would ball up. I wasn't really sure, so I went to the E.R. After the doctor examined me, I was reassured that I was in labor, but I had only dilated 2 centimeters, and the labor wasn't active, so I had to go back home. Active labor means the contractions are back to back. Instead of going back home, my friend John Dancy took me to the soul food restaurant, and we ate a lot of delicious food. I am known very well at that restaurant, so they treated me well. One lady will always make me fresh biscuits when I come in. They couldn't believe how I could put so much food in

my small body. While I was out eating the pain was now coming repeatedly. I don't know how I was able to enjoy my meal under that circumstance. My friend was worried and frightened because every time a contraction wave hit me, I was like, "Ow!" John's face looked scared, especially when I would start to breathe very fast. Right about now I can't remember what day of the week it was, but I know it was March 8, 2005. Finally around six in the evening I went to the emergency room. I couldn't take it any more. It started to snow like crazy. I had made it in time so I didn't get stranded in the snow.

When I got to the maternity ward, the nurses prepped me up for labor. They took vital signs and insurance information. I changed into a hospital gown. I had the I.V. machine next to my bed. I was given some pain medication, and finally I went to sleep. I remember the nurse coming in my room to wake me up so I could deliver my baby. I didn't feel any more contractions; the pain had disappeared completely. But every time my stomach would ball up and harden, I intuitively knew I should push. There were four people around me. The doctor and three nurses were just watching as I coached myself. I did not want their help. I don't know why. With about 30 pushes, wa, la! This beautiful little being came out. I was so tired I couldn't ask the nurses anything. I was confused, too. I didn't know what they were talking about or whom they were talking to, but now I assume it was me because everybody's eyes were fixated at me. I just didn't know what was going on. I was extremely exhausted. Even when they said he was 10 pounds, I didn't know what they were talking about. Finally, I got a chance to hold my beloved, and we have been together ever since.

What Does Moses Mean?

M is for mysterious and mighty and magnificent. O is for outstanding and obedient. S is for sweet. E is for exciting and excellent, and S is for smart and special. Moses, this is what you mean to me and even more. You have been a magnificent little boy since the womb. I am so crazy about you, little son. You are a savior. I have good days with you always. I love watching you, no matter what you are doing. So sweet and smart. I can't stop hugging and kissing you. You are my best friend. You are my favorite to talk about. I often ask God why do I love you so? I am always proud of you. You are courageous and strong because you are not with Mommy and you are hanging in there really tough. You show me strength by not shedding tears while we are apart. Where do you get all that mightiness from? I know one day when you become older, you will be someone great.

Because you are so obedient, intelligent, outstanding, sweet, and excellent, you were awarded Student of the Month twice, for October and November of 2009. You go boy!! You are only four years of age and you are showing who you will become someday when you mature. Mommy is so proud of you always. Everybody loves Moses. You are indeed an anointed young man. Everybody who meets you and spends some time with you feels your positive aura. Even when Mommy speaks of you they love it. Moses, you are so handsome with those cute eyes. When I was a little girl, around four, you and I look very much the same in every which way. The way you stand, the way you move. We even had the same hair cut and skin complexion, which is fair-skinned.



The great Mrs. Evans once told me and every now and then she reminds me of how special and obedient you are. She says Moses is a reflection of his mom. I was like, wow!! She knows. She can see so clearly that you are so special. She sees me inside of you, which is really true. We are so close, and we have so much in common.

A Meal I Shared with Someone I Love

My sweetie pooh loves my barbeque, so he asked "Mommy are you going to make me some barbeque?" So on Saturday morning around 10:00 a.m., I began my gourmet cooking. Preparing for my cookouts takes almost a week because I am a gourmet chef. I go to the finest meat markets, like Halal Meat Market Kosher. Those meat places don't use antibiotics or injections on the animals they breed. My food has to be seasoned a day before the cookout. I always cook my side dishes the night before. Side dishes are greens, okra, cabbage, and sometimes spaghetti. My grill is washed ahead of time. That is a must. I love freshness. It takes about two hours to clean and season all the meats. I always do it by myself. I would like help but it isn't necessary. By the way, if I can't get a hold of wood chips, I can't cook. I am hooked on wood chips.

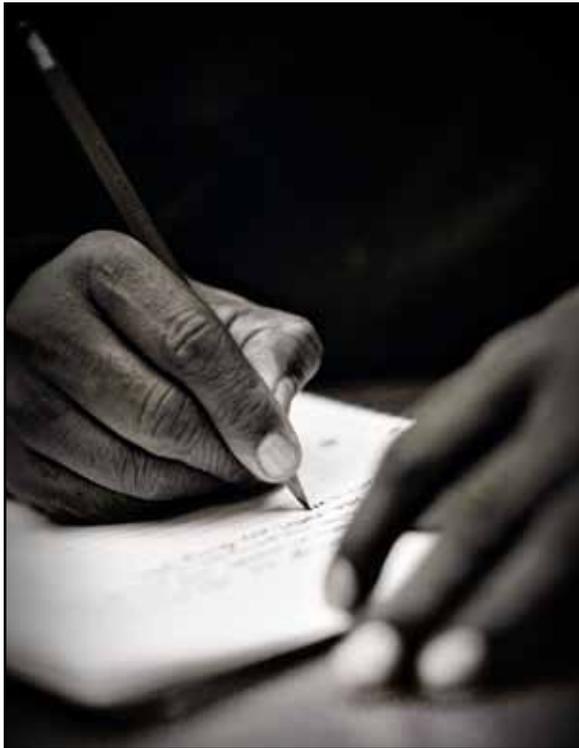
The cooking took place in my back yard, but the night before, I made some greens and okra in my kitchen. On that Saturday morning everything was perfect. After a while my neighbor came out along with the other neighborhood people. We all ate greens, short ribs, chicken, polish sausages, and corn. Just before the food was actually done, I was hungry like a wild bear. You should have seen how I mauled that meal when the time came!

The people who come to my barbeques always say, "Girl, you can cook!" I know. I love to feed the neighborhood kids even though they get on my nerves. I love to feed people because I know my food tastes good and they will enjoy it.

A Place of Refuge

My place of refuge is my bedroom. I have my bedroom fixed up to my perfection. Everything is in order. Everything is color coordinated. I would like to start by telling you how I maintain the environment. Before I mop and sweep, I rearrange my clothing and shoes, clean my dresser and closets, and shake everything. Linens on my bed come off. Window curtains come down, and my mattress and headboard get wiped off. I also have to move my bed so I can sweep. I sweep my sacred space twice. Then I get a bucket of soapy water and a towel and wipe the corners the mop can't get to. After wiping the small crevices, it is time to mop. I mop twice. Once with nice, soapy water and the second mopping is with clean, clear water. After sweeping and mopping, I put new linens on the bed and curtains up in the window. I light two incense sticks and burn a yellow or purple

candle. My bedroom has a new feeling of sacred cleanness. I now shower while the incense is burning and the candle is dimly lit. When I am all clean from head to toe, I have to put on all white or gold – the color changes at times. I have my tea on my dresser. I sip on my tea and begin to meditate with the candle and the nice aroma of the incense.



BRIAN HEMPHILL

The Hemphill Family

My mother, father, and grandma are the most important people in my life. My mother worked, cooked, and took care of the family. My father works and cares for his kids. They both protected us and my father still does. My grandma loved us and protected us, and she spoiled all of her grandchildren.

I grew up in Chicago on the south side with my four brothers and one sister. I love them so much, though it is hard to be a middle child with siblings. My sister and brothers are overprotective of me. My sister is a mother hen. My brothers want to be the old brothers. Being in the middle makes me the mediator. I have to keep the balance between my sister and brothers. I love them so much and I wouldn't change them for anything in the world.

My sister, Kenita, has two boys and one girl. My brother, Anthony, has nine kids. My baby brother, Sam, has one son. My other brother, Anthony, has one son and my brother, Antoine, has five daughters and one son. I had one girl. She died in a hurricane in Florida. This makes me the uncle to twenty children, ages 5 to 18. I teach them how to be responsible people in the future. I am overprotective of them like my sister and brothers are of me. I took them trick or treating and I was so tired, but it was fun for me.

My First Step Family

I live with ten people in the recovery home. We are the foundation of the house. We help each other with the recovery process. We help pull each other up in the right direction. These people are important in my life. I moved into the recovery home four months ago. It is on the north side of Chicago. It is restoring me to sanity.

In the house I have eight brothers and two sisters. They keep me in line with the help of my sponsor. My brothers' names are Eddie, Michael B., Michael F., Greg, Alfredo, Vincent, Tom, and Craig. My sisters' names are Kim and Jenaia.

My sponsor is a great man and he helps me with my recovery. His name is Elliot. He keeps me grounded to stay focused in my recovery and to take it one day at a time. We read The Big Book and talk about the story. I tell him about the story and how it relates to me. We go to different meetings. God put him in my life to help me do right. My sponsor, Elliot, has two more sponsee brothers. We read The Big Book and meet together for extra support.

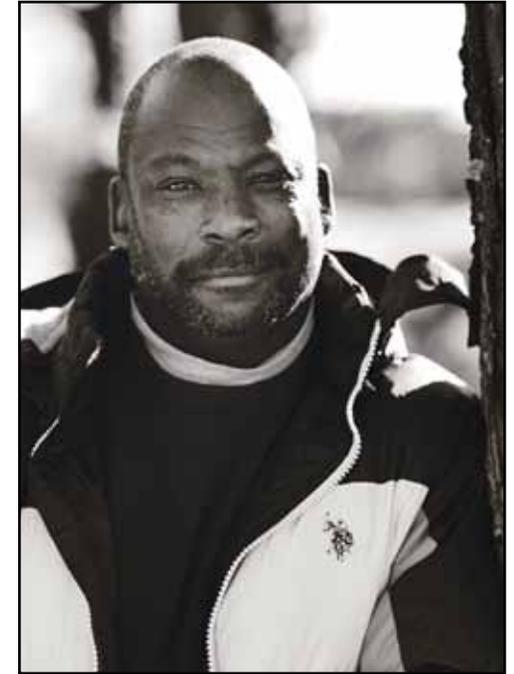
I love them all. I wouldn't give them up for anything in the world.

GREGORY HYNES

Coming to Chicago

I came to Chicago in 1973 when my mother was killed. I came from Kentucky, and I am so happy I came from there. In Kentucky, the pace is different. The people look out for one another. I remember saying the wrong words to a lady that knew my mother, and she told my mother. My mother got the foolness out of my heart that day. A day to remember. People there would speak to everyone and care for one another and were friendly to each other.

My aunt and uncle lived in Chicago and asked us to come and live with them, and me and my sister and brother said yes, knowing this was God's plan for us to do. I was with my sister who was 22 years of age and my brother who was 18 years of age, and I was 13 years old. Living with my uncle and aunt was different because my uncle taught me how to be a man and how to do things in life, like how to cut the grass and take out the trash and wash the dishes and other things I need to do as a man. I am blessed to have had him in my life to teach me things that better me.



I felt a little sad when we left Kentucky to come to Chicago. It was a big change for us coming to a big city like this. I feel ok about it now that I have been here a lot of years. I still miss Kentucky. The people are nice and kind that live there. Some things are different between Kentucky and Chicago. The people here in Chicago are not as friendly as the people in Kentucky, and there is a lot of racism in this city. I know the people that are in the south are more loving and caring toward one another.

My Life as a Father

On August 11, 1991 at Columbus Hospital, my son was born, and I was there to help my wife as she and I had our first child together. It was a Friday when he came out of his mother's womb, and to see and be there was a powerful thing. It was the day I became a father, and the Lord Jesus chose me to be a father of this gift. I thank him for my son.

Being a father is a special thing in my life because I did not raise my son the way my dad and mother raised me. Just being there in his life was a key to me being a real man. Any man can make a baby but it takes a real man to raise a boy. I love the gift God has given me—spending time playing basketball, taking him to the park, and going to the beach. Just being a father and learning about my son and him about me as his dad. The Lord Jesus Holy Spirit has taught me how to be a father. So many boys don't have a father because they left them, and I could not be like that. That was not inside of me, so I stood up and became a father the Lord wanted me to be.

I have a lot of pictures of my son. Taking a lot of pictures was important because just being there was a key to his life as a boy, knowing he was loved and cared for by his dad and mother. That is important to him and me, and I will give these pictures back to him one day soon.

Now he is 18 years of age in his last year of high school knowing where he is going after 2010. After high school, he wants to go to college and take classes for business. He will have his own paint store and other dreams will come to pass for him. I want to see him become successful and I know in my heart he can and will be if he puts the Lord at the head of his life and keeps focused on the things he needs to do.

Turning Point – Being Saved

I had a life that was going nowhere. Just go to work, get off, and buy beer. I was thinking just pay bills, watch football and basketball games, and go out on Wednesday night to bars and just do my own thing. I was 35 and I had things in life—food, clothing, money, and a wife, but I was miserable in the inside. I was empty and had no life, just going around in a circle every day not having a purpose in life.

It all changed for the best on November 27, 1997 when my wife left me, and I did not see it coming. When I got home that next day, November 28, 1997, and found out she left and took my son, I tried to kill myself with drugs. But my sister was “born again” and prayed for me when I told her what I was going to do

to myself. The Lord sent a woman, Donna, to me, and she told me to not give up in life. I met Donna at the hospital when I was sick with a cold and she was a nurse. We talked about what was going on in my life and I told her about my family problems and that I was thinking of killing myself. She told me about how much the Lord loves me and then she asked me to come to her church. I came to her church and went up to the front and gave my life to my lord and savior, Jesus, and I became born again inside. With his spirit inside of me, my life became new January 31, 1998, and I am hooked up with Jesus' holy spirit inside for the rest of my life. I am very happy knowing who I am.

I have been a born again Christian for over 12 years, and I am very much involved in the security ministries at my church. I am now working on my GED at my church and I will have my limo driving license in the future.





The mission of Goldie's Place is to assist adults who are homeless to become self-sufficient by providing life skills, education and support, based on our belief in human potential and broad spiritual principles.

The Goldie's Place Employment Assistance and Supportive Services program is designed to address core issues underlying homelessness, and to fill gaps in the existing services offered through other agencies. Emphasis is placed on one-to-one interaction with a focus on building self-sufficiency and self-confidence. Taken together, these services form a unique, integrated system that works holistically by enhancing self-esteem, job readiness, presentable appearance, dental wellness and employability.

Goldie's Place 
www.goldiesplace.org

"Stories of Family and Fellowship" is a result of Writers' Circle, an 8-week writing workshop created by Literacy Works in partnership with Goldie's Place.

Literacy Works' mission is to fulfill the promise of a basic human right: the right to read, write, and interpret the world.



To fulfill its mission, Literacy Works provides workshops, trainings and direct literacy services to 50 agencies throughout the Chicago area.

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