

# Director's Report

## And Each Day You Mean One More

By Barbara Bass, T-C '88, [bbass@towson.edu](mailto:bbass@towson.edu)



Most of us are seeking community in our lives. What is behind that longing? I'm not sure what was happening in my life when I applied for the Summer Institute in 1988, but I realized on the first day that the MWP was filling a need that I didn't even know existed. It was a safe space where I felt surrounded by kindred spirits. After that summer, I knew I wanted to remain connected.

It seems that most forces in education tend to drive us away from community, but the Summer Institute shepherds us all toward it. Good conversation flourishes. Creativity flourishes. Friendship flourishes. We have the opportunity to sit with colleagues and explore ourselves as teachers and as human beings. It is a community of congruence that sustains us—a safe space conducive to honest self-exploration and group inquiry. Where else are we able to find such opportunities for both personal and professional growth?

I didn't realize when I became involved with the Writing Project that I had been searching for renewal, but I found it in this community of fellow teachers. I kept coming back for more. Each MWP-sponsored event helped me get through the next few months. I needed my regular MWP "fix." I had no idea when I participated in the 1988 STI that 10 years later I would be the site director. Now I get that "fix" every day. For me, the MWP is what Parker Palmer refers to as one of "... the diverse ways we answer the heart's longing to be connected with the largeness of life."

At the annual MWP leadership retreat this past January, 43 T-C's gathered on a cold winter's morning to immerse themselves in that community—to talk, to listen, to share, to write and, of course, to eat. Soup, sandwiches, brownies and coffee fueled the discussion. We wrote about our strengths and talked about how we might use those strengths to help the MWP grow. (See the list of wonderful ideas generated during that meeting on page 14.)

Now we're asking you to become involved, too. Wait! Don't stop reading! Hear me out a little here. Consider these questions: How might you reconnect with the MWP?

How are you able to contribute? What on that list generated last January looks intriguing to you? What level of commitment are you willing to make? The MWP requires leadership at every turn and from every corner. All we are doing is inviting you to continue the conversations that you began at your STI.

So what does getting involved mean? Most people are afraid of getting caught in something that would add pressure to their already rich and full lives, but there are things you can do to contribute that do not involve meetings and more work. For example, you could encourage your colleagues to participate in one of our Summer Institutes—at TU, in Frederick, or in Southern Maryland. You could invite them to come with you to one of our Saturday Write-to-Learn workshops where they can see for themselves the quality of the presentations they will benefit from at the STI. You could share information about our statewide Creative Nonfiction conference, "Writing Toward You," featuring Georgia Heard, to be held on the TU campus on May 19.

Have you ever thought to yourself, "You know what would be a good idea?" Tell us what that idea is and we'll help you make it happen. Or let us know if you have an activity that we can add to the list generated last January. We want you to become an active member of the MWP in whatever way works best for you. Begin by inviting a colleague to participate, and watch your involvement grow.

I'll leave you with these lines from Marge Piercy's poem:

The Low Road:  
It starts when you say We  
And know who you mean, and each  
Day you mean one more.

MWP-ily, yours,  
Barbara