

Media Kit for Women Writing for (a) Change

Introduction

People often ask: “What kind of writing do you DO at WWf(a)C?” The answer is: “ALL KINDS!” Beginners yearn to discover the writer they hope to become. Experienced writers bring writing projects and a desire to deepen and hone their craft. Journalers come because they love to write in community. All voices are welcome and respected. And all who come to WWf(a)C say the same thing: It’s changed their lives.

Women Writing for (a) Change inspires individuals to craft more conscious lives through the art of writing and the practices of community.

Within this kit you will find a wealth of information for reporting about WWf(a)C and our programs.

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Please contact Kathy Wade or Katie Hall with questions or to receive a hard copy of our media kit: (513) 272-1171.

Women Writing for (a) Change Mission

WWf(a)C’s feminist philosophy is inclusive, collaborative and accepting of all women – and men in designated offerings – whether they’re beginning or more experienced writers. Our mission is to foster a healthy writing community where the words of individuals from all walks of life are nurtured, developed and celebrated.

WWf(a)C programs inspire people - women and girls in particular - to craft more conscious lives through the art of writing and the practices of community. This effort is rooted in the knowledge that the well-being of women and girls has a positive effect on families, institutions, and the planet.

Women Writing for (a) Change and its sister organization, Women Writing for (a) Change Foundation, comprise a writing center created to evoke, hold, and publish the truth-telling writing of women and girls. WWf(a)C circles provide communities within which writers develop their skills, strengthen their voices, enhance their health, and learn to appreciate their capacity to create positive change in all spheres.

Women Writing for (a) Change History

Since its establishment in 1991, Women Writing for (a) Change has supported the lives of women and girls for whom writing is, or might become, an important spiritual, creative, and therapeutic practice.

In 1998 Women Writing for (a) Change participants created a committee structure that raised and administered funds for women and girls to attend programs at reduced or no cost and focused on outreach, development, and marketing circles. In September 1999 this group began the process of incorporating the committee structure as a not-for-profit organization. In September 2000 the task force became Women Writing for (a) Change Foundation's founding Board of Trustees. WWf(a)C Foundation was recognized as a non-profit by the State of Ohio in 2000 and by the Internal Revenue Service in 2001.

In October 2002 Women Writing for (a) Change was voted "Best Support Group of the City" in the "Best of the City" issue of *Cincinnati Magazine*. WWf(a)C was hailed as "a place where women 'write' themselves into newer and different lives."

From 1999-2005 "Women Writing for (a) Change on the Radio" broadcast the words of women writers to a four-state audience with a radio show on NPR affiliate 91.7 FM WVXU and an Internet show using live Web streaming. The mission of the radio show was "to bring women to words, and the words of women to the world," and to manifest an alternative to divisive talk radio.

For 10 years WWf(a)C classes and activities were held on the second floor of the Union Hall for Ironworkers Local #44. However, after significant organizational growth, a capital campaign began in 2005 to acquire a new space. In January 2006 WWf(a)C moved to its new and current location in Silverton, Ohio.

In late 2007 WWf(a)C entered into a collaboration with Catherine of Siena Virtual College to spread our organizational mission into cyberspace. Because of this partnership women can experience the WWf(a)C process internationally and interculturally.

Women Writing for (a) Change is unique because regular attention is paid to what has come to be known as "Caring for the Container." Each class and every task group pays regular and reverent attention to the quality of relationships and truth-telling within that group. Writing practice is a part of every gathering; the values of the school are evident across the board. Growth has been organic, coming from within the lives of the founder, faculty members, and the thousands of women who have written in WWf(a)C classes. WWf(a)C has created a sustainable model of learning, business, and community-building.

Women Writing for (a) Change Fact Sheet

In 1991 Mary Pierce Brosmer established Women Writing for (a) Change, a grassroots writing organization for women. The first WWf(a)C class was comprised of 15 women. WWf(a)C is the only

- Cincinnati arts organization to use a hybrid business structure - both a 501(c) (3) incorporated non-profit foundation and an LLC
- Cincinnati organization that intentionally creates sustainable writing communities, and
- writing organization that focuses primarily on the empowerment of women's voices.

WWf(a)C has enrolled over 800 women and 300 girls between the ages of 8-95 into classes since its inception. The WWf(a)C class return rate is approximately 85%.

Different types of WWf(a)C courses are offered and are based on class participants—for women, for women and men, for families, for young women, and for girls.

A typical WWf(a)C writing class is comprised of 20 students of varying writing levels; all voices are welcomed and respected.

The WWf(a)C Foundation was established in 2000 as a sister organization to the WWf(a)C school in order to provide adequate human and financial resources for WWf(a)C outgrowth activities. WWf(a)C Foundation financial support comes from The Tomcinoh Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, The Fine Arts Fund, and The Ohio Arts Council.

WWf(a)C Foundation oversees

- scholarship funds for program access
- all young women's and girls' programs (Young Women Writing for (a) Change and the Young Women's Feminist Leadership Academy)
- community outreach programs and partnerships, and
- WWf(a)C radio programming and podcasting

Community outreach program participants and partners have included organizations such as Silverton Paideia School, Cincinnati YWCA, Enjoy the Arts, Lighthouse Youth Shelter, Cancer Family Care, Ursuline Sisters of North America, and E-Women's Network.

WWf(a)C Foundation offers both full and partial scholarships to reduce any barriers that may prevent program participation. A total of \$4,512 in scholarships was awarded to students in 2007.

The newly renovated WWf(a)C building—located in Silverton, Ohio—is ADA accessible with a youth-friendly environment and enough space to hold multiple classes simultaneously.

WWf(a)C has affiliate schools in Birmingham, Alabama; Indianapolis, Indiana; Burlington, Vermont; Grand Junction, Colorado; Indianapolis, Indiana; Louisville, Kentucky; Portland, Oregon; and Traverse City, Michigan. A New Jersey/New York area school is currently being formed.

Interested parties can register for classes, apply for scholarships, request a monthly newsletter, and donate to WWf(a)C Foundation online at www.womenwriting.org.

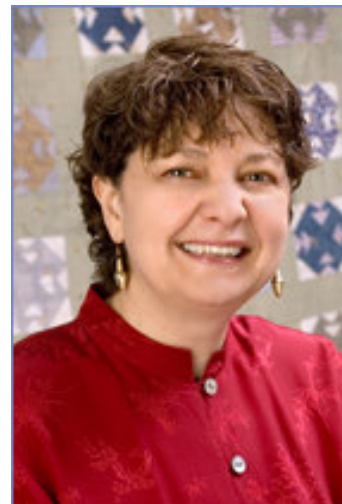
Women Writing for (a) Change Staff Biographies

Mary Pierce Brosmer, Founding Director

Mary is a teacher, poet and feminist visionary who dreamed and then created a school which supports the lives of women and girls who are working to commit life to language.

At WWf(a)C her roles are maintaining vision and mission; teaching in the adult women's programs and the Feminist Leadership Academy; program creation and implementation; development and training of current artists and faculty; development of leaders for future staff locally and for sister schools throughout the country, and visioning for the future of the WWf(a)C movement.

The WWF(a)C Foundation is an entity Mary envisioned as a way to both expand the work and mission of the school to women from all walks of life, and to provide resources for the future of WWf(a)C.



Mary Pierce Brosmer

Women Writing for (a) Change on the Radio, which aired on PBS affiliate WVXU, 91.7 FM for six years, is a program Mary founded as a way of "bringing women to words and the words of women to the world."

Within the Feminist Leadership Academy of Cincinnati Mary is building a sustainable community of women leaders from all walks of life for the purpose of incorporating conscious feminine values and principles into educational, political, activist, religious, corporate, arts and other organizations. The Academy is also an apprenticeship for women who wish to take the work of WWf(a)C to other parts of the country.

Mary's poetry has appeared in Workshop 6: The Teacher as Writer; If I had a Hammer: anthology on women and work, Early Ripening--From Al to Zimroth: American Women's Poetry Now (Marge Piercy ed.); Verses and Lines: Anthology of Poems about Poetry; Cincinnati Neighborhood Poets; Feminisms; The Ohio State University Center for Women's Studies; Sojourner: the Women's Forum (Cambridge, Mass); Forum: A Women's Studies Quarterly of the University of Cincinnati; English Journal; Voices from the Middle.

Poetry Readings and Performances include: A Natural Response: Poetry Reading, Weston Art Gallery at the Aronoff Center for the Arts; Soundings, A Courageous Collaboration Muse: Cincinnati Women's Choir and wwfac; Reaching Out To Girls by Remembering Ourselves as Girls American Association of University Women; Expressive Arts and Healing, Good Samaritan Hospital Conference; N. Kentucky University Center for Women's Studies; Greater Cincinnati Counseling Association, Winter Conference, Poetry and Personal Process, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio; National Council Teachers of English, National Conference, Louisville, Ky; Jewish Hospital Adolescent Psychiatric Unit; Women-Church Convergence, Feminine Images of the Divine; Women's Crisis Center of Northern Kentucky University, Fifteen Years of Listening, Anniversary Celebration; The Kentucky Writers Series, North Central Women's Studies Regional Conference, The Catholic Committee of Appalachia, Conference for Workers Among the Rural Poor, A Spirituality That Sustains.

Awards include The Athena Award from Cincy Business in 2007, for her leadership as a social entrepreneur; Outstanding Leader of 2005 in the Arts, by Leading Women, Inc; a Post-Corbett Award Finalist, Literary Artist, 1991; and First Prize for Poetry, Conference of Cincinnati Women, 1986.

She is a consultant member of Society for Organizational Learning (SoL), and through Consulting for a Change, Mary works with organizations to effect and sustain change.

Mary earned an MA in English, Xavier University 1984, and a BA in English from Ohio Dominican College, 1970.

Kathleen Wade, WWf(a)C Executive Director



Kathleen Wade

As Executive Director of WWf(a)C, Kathy is responsible for the administrative operations and faculty leadership of Women Writing for (a) Change. Her first love is as a teacher and writer in the semester courses in the adult women's program. She also designs and facilitates workshops and consults with individual writers.

An Associate of the Ohio Writing Project, Kathy has conducted writing workshops for teachers in the Bay Area and in Cincinnati. Her poetry has appeared in Ohio Teachers Write, Plymouth Writers Group, and Cincinnati Neighborhood Poet Laureate anthologies.

Kathy's first nonfiction book, *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives*, (OPEL Press, July 2004) tells the personal stories of lay associates of religious orders. In

1995, she received the Ashland Teacher Achievement Award.

Kathy came to WWf(a)C as a writer in 1996. Her former life includes twenty-nine years as a classroom teacher, where she taught English, drama, journalism, writing and reading junior high through college. She has also worked professionally as a writer, editor and photographer, where her work has been honored by the Cincinnati Editors' Association.

Kathy was a founding member of WWf(a)C Foundation, and served two years as its chair and three as its treasurer.

She earned her M. Ed. from the University of Cincinnati in 1976 and is a 1960 graduate of Edgecliff College (now Xavier University), with a BA in Speech and Theatre.

Ellen Doyle, President, WWf(a)C Foundation Board of Trustees

Ellen is a graduate of the Women Writing for (a) Change Feminist Leadership Academy and serves as President on the WWf(a)C Foundation Board of Trustees. She has also served as faculty and as Administrator of Women Writing for (a) Change on the Radio.

She is a member of the Ursulines of Brown County and has extensive leadership and organizational development experience in education and non-profit organizations.

A seasoned teacher, facilitator, mentor, spiritual director and writer, Ellen is committed to the ongoing work of discerning, practicing and celebrating life and leadership with creative attentiveness.



Ellen Doyle

Andrea Nichols, Executive Director of the WWfaC Foundation

Andrea Nichols is Executive Director of the WWfaC Foundation and a 2004 graduate of the Feminist Leadership Academy. She also serves as a faculty member in the young women and girls programs, as well as in the adult core semester classes.

Andrea's twelve years as a creative writing teacher in public schools have been defined greatly by being a long time member of the Tuesday night WWf(a)C class, where she learned to walk more consciously and confidently in the world.

Andrea holds a BA from Ohio University and an M. Ed. from Miami University. In her current position as Executive Director of the Foundation, Andrea continues to maintain its vision and mission, and to provide leadership within the Foundation's programs, outreach and fundraising ventures.



Andrea Nichols

Jenn Reid, Director of Young Women Writing for (a) Change



Jenn Reid

Jenn is a 2004 graduate of the Feminist Leadership Academy and serves as Director of Young Women Writing for (a) Change. She teaches and coordinates the young women and girls programs, and is the Foundation's chief grant-writer.

Jenn taught creative writing in public schools for ten years before joining the staff of WWfaC. She began as a member of the Tuesday night WWf(a)C class, where she discovered she wanted to make WWfaC a major part of her life.

She served on the Board of Trustees of WWf(a)C Foundation for five years, two of those as its chair, and continues as Board Secretary. Jenn earned her BA in Secondary Education from Miami University, Oxford,

Ohio, in 1995, and Master of Arts in Curriculum and Leadership from Miami in 2003. She has completed studies in education toward a doctorate.

WWf(a)C Faculty Biographies

Mary Ann Jansen, Faculty

Mary Ann is a 2004 graduate of the Feminist Leadership Academy and a former student in a number of WWf(a)C semester classes.

She is a member of the Ursulines of Brown County, a long time educator, and has background in retreat work and facilitation. She loved sports too much to pursue a degree in physical education, and when time allows she heads to the Smoky Mountains with a journal and camera.

Mary Ann has over twenty years' experience as a classroom teacher of English and spirituality, high school through college and with adult groups. She holds a BS and M.Ed. from Xavier University and has completed postgraduate work toward a PhD in Spirituality.

Sally Schneider, Faculty

Sally's first exposure to Women Writing for a Change was a Saturday sampler class that she and her (then) ten-year-old daughter attended in 2002. The encouragement and warmth that she experienced on that frigid February morning "hooked" her, and she's been an enthusiastic member of the community ever since. After seven consecutive semesters as a writer in the Tuesday morning class, Sally graduated from the Feminist Leadership Academy in 2006.

For three decades, since she received her BS in elementary education from Miami University, Sally had wondered what she wanted to be when she grew up. Now she knows! As a facilitator of WWfaC classes, Sally gets to do all the things she loves best: writing, reading, listening, nurturing, and empowering - with other warm, wise, creative and conscious friends and mentors.

Phebe Beiser, Faculty

A 2006 graduate of the Feminist Leadership Academy, Phebe (Karen) Beiser attended her first WWfaC writing class in the fall of 2004. She teaches in the adult semester classes, and in WWfaC's "virtual" online offerings. She also is a member of the Foundation's Media Circle, bringing women's words and stories to the world through WWfaC podcasts on our website.

Phebe's first career was as a librarian with the Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County. She received a BA in English from Miami University and a Masters in Library Science from the University of Kentucky.

Since the 1970's, Phebe has been involved in the local feminist community. She founded the Ohio Lesbian Archives and has been active in women's spirituality groups. She currently writes a monthly column in Q City News.

Marissa McNamara, Faculty

Marissa discovered WWf(a)C after moving from Atlanta in 2006, by attending a WWf(a)C workshop at the Contemporary Arts Center. She joined the Wednesday night class and decided to apprentice in the Young Women and Girls programs.

She is a 2008 graduate of the Feminist Leadership Academy, and teaches in the young women's and adult program. She also works with the Foundation as the Director of Outreach and as the Event Coordinator for the Author's Circle.

Outside WWfaC, Marissa teaches English and writing at two area colleges, reads books on tape for the Association for the Blind, and volunteers at Girls Club.

Marissa earned a BA from the University of Cincinnati and an MA from Florida State University. She has taught writing for the past 14 years and has published her work in various publications such as RATTLE. In 2005, she won 1st place in the Georgia Byron Herbert Reece Poetry Contest, 2nd place in the Georgia Edwin Davin Vickers Poetry Contest, and was selected for and attended a month's artist residency at The Julia and David White Artists' Colony in Ciudad Colon, Costa Rica. During 2007 she was awarded an artist residency at the Kentucky Women's Foundation.

Testimonials from WWf(a)C Participants:

From Kathie Martin Ossege:

Through the magic of WWFaC I have found a voice for the army of women who live inside my head: the lover, the injured child, the frustrated mother, the sage, the overworked business woman, the philosopher, the sinner, and the saint.

From Sally Schneider:

On August 26, 2002, I began a semester-long writing class at Women Writing for (a) Change. I didn't understand the name of the school. Writing for (a) *Change*? What kind of change? I only knew that I needed more social and intellectual stimulation than I was receiving as a stay-at-home mom, and suspected that writing would serve as the creative outlet I craved. But taking this class felt scary...and BIG. Who was I, a forty-eight-year-old housewife, to think that I could *write*? I had no career experience in the field. I was never an English major, and I hadn't written a term paper since college. I felt sure that I would be a "fish out of water," that everyone else in the class would be more talented, better educated, and more experienced than I. Perhaps some would even be published authors. What was I *thinking*?

Had I not already invested fifty dollars in a non-refundable deposit, I might have opted for a quick retreat. Having committed financially, however, I buried my fears, took a deep breath.... Here, an eclectic mix of chairs shaped the space into an inviting circle. Soft lighting illuminated a tall vase of cut flowers, a candle, and a wicker basket, all of which rested on an attractive center cloth. A lush mural was painted on one wall, a colorful quilt adorned another, and soothing, instrumental music wafted a warm welcome. This space seemed surprisingly familiar; in fact it felt like home. I exhaled deeply, sensing that this was a safe place – and that it was where I belonged.

Years later, I stand taller. I walk with a surer stride. I extend a firmer handshake, beam a broader smile, evince a brighter glow. But these are only the outward manifestations of a more profound change. At WWF(a)C, I received both the motivation to write my truth and the encouragement to speak it (occasionally into a microphone!). Equally important, I learned the art of active listening. This skill enabled me to be deeply present when my "writing sisters" shared their stories and assured me that I would be deeply heard by them. Participating in the Women Writing for (a) Change community has cracked open the shell of me, revealing the hidden "fruit" within. Through writing and sharing in this conscious community, I have learned to understand, forgive, and appreciate myself. And doing so has freed me to understand, forgive, and appreciate others. In short, I have grown to be more loving – and have been blessed by the love of others in return.

Women Writing for (a) Change has improved my writing skills. More than that, however, it has increased my confidence and has empowered me to seek and speak my truth. It has introduced me to dear friends in my writing classes and to powerful published poets: all of whom have enriched my life with their wisdom and their words.

And it has fanned the flame of a writing hobby into the fire of a career. I now understand the word “change” in the school’s title! - Sally Schneider

From Ann Flannery:

With any new endeavor, I can count on taking away unexpected gifts from the experience. My time with WWFaC has proven that to be true once again. I signed up for this class to help me uncover my creative abilities. During this semester I successfully tapped into a long slumbering love of writing. I am pleased to have re-awakened the joy of writing in me.

Although I knew I would be writing, I never dreamed I would feel myself worthy of the description “writer”. Having achieved that status in my own mind has been an unexpected and oh so pleasant surprise; a real gift that I take away with me.

I learned so much from this class and the amazing, awe-inspiring women that make up our circle. The rituals, the respect, the courage and the level of pure talent that fills this space have all been a welcome decadent treat each week. The emphasis on intentionality infused a centered mindfulness and created a sacred space that celebrated the richness of our feminine energy.

I am grateful to each and every one of you, my WWFaC sisters. I am a better me for having been in your presence. Long live WWFaC!

From Judy Cirillo:

Gradually, I’m learning to take hold of my life. Writing is the way I process my life and the world. Being part of this group insures that I will continue to write. And sharing with the group helps me to know I’m not alone.

From Tina Neyer:

In the months [I have been at WWf(a)C] there is a catharsis that has taken place. Like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon, I have broken forth from the tight bands of once was.

I delve into the depths of my soul for the words that hit the pristine pages like snow flakes hit a frozen ground. They sparkle when the light hits them as though God had tossed diamonds at my feet.

We are like a mother’s anniversary ring, sparkling with the colors, sharing brilliance. There is strength in the setting that holds these jewels in this circle, a strength that can’t be broken by societal pressure. For 3 or 4 hours, I go where my soul can feel something new, something different from the day to day responsibilities of life. I never really put away the experiences of [Women Writing for (a) Change].

From Robin O’Neal:

I began coming to class just following my divorce. It was a painful time of healing and growth. Being in the circle – surrounded by the rituals, accepted immediately and

without question by the group as a whole...provided a safe haven where I gradually ...began to reveal myself in words.

As others shared, I fell in love with each of their voices, their words, their struggles, their journeys. As others shared, I realized the difference their words were making to me and my life. And so I shared. I read my stash of poetry. I read essays and letters and unfinished stories. My voice had come to life.

Other writers I respected liked my writing; they thought I had something to say. They listened to me. I felt heard. And so I wrote more. And more. And more. Now I call myself a writer.

The gathering of women writers sharing their truths is sacred and powerful. I have watched so many women find their voices here as I have. I have seen them leave the circle of WWf(a)C and go out into their lives knowing that they have something to say..

And so I am entering into the WWf(a)C community not only as a writer, but also as a leader. I have found a home. It is a home where I some day hope to stand in the doorway welcoming other writers who are looking for their voices.

From Mary Kroner:

I began writing at WWFAC five or six years ago as a member of the Tuesday night class. I had an unformed idea lurking around in my head and I needed to get it out into the light, onto paper. That Tuesday night class gave me the impetus to carve writing habits into my busy little life. It also gave me the courage and desire to improve myself as a writer.

Life circumstances made it necessary to stop my involvement in this writing community for several years. But it was extremely important for me to know that it was still there, still active and still available. Later I participated in an advanced prose class, concluding the work I started all those years ago.

WWf(a)C gives individuals opportunities to shape up. Just as one goes to a gym to shape up one's body, women join WWf(a)C to shape up their thoughts, experiences, hearts and minds. Who can deny the importance of these aspects in a woman's life?

From my perspective, WWf(a)C goes an important step further than merely helping women learn to give voice to their experiences. Its most important role may not be specifically about writing. Through the thoughtful structure of its operations, women learn things that are of crucial value in the world at large: self respect, empathy for the experiences of others, a sense of community and the need for reflection to keep balance in one's life. The common experience of writing and sharing one's writing facilitates the occurrence of activities of which our world is sorely in need.

Women Writing for (a) Change is a unique and valuable contributor to our world!

From Carol Bussey:

At the 2005 summer retreat, I was ecstatic to have an entire week to write and be with other writers. The summer air hung hot and humid in Kentucky... and I felt fired up by the feedback from my small group. The writing helped me to cope with a difficult

situation in my life for which I had been unprepared. The support of women was real. I treasure the memories and the faces of the women who came to that summer retreat.

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**Women Writing for (a) Change Contacts**

6906 Plainfield Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236  
(513) 272-1171, Women Writing for (a) Change  
(513) 791-4057, Women Writing for (a) Change Foundation  
FAX: (513)-794-9444

**Women Writing for (a) Change Leadership**

Mary Pierce Brosmer, Founding Director, [mpierce@womenwriting.org](mailto:mpierce@womenwriting.org)  
Kathleen Wade, Executive Director, [kwade@womenwriting.org](mailto:kwade@womenwriting.org)  
Katie Ford Hall, Assistant Director, [khall@womenwriting.org](mailto:khall@womenwriting.org)

**Women Writing for (a) Change Faculty**

Mary Pierce Brosmer  
Mary Ann Jansen  
Andrea Nichols  
Kathleen Wade  
Phebe Beiser  
Sally Schneider  
Marissa McNamara

**Women Writing for (a) Change Foundation Leadership**

Andrea Nichols, Executive Director-[anichols@womenwriting.org](mailto:anichols@womenwriting.org)  
Ellen Doyle, President  
Tina Neyer, Vice President  
Kathleen Wade, Treasurer  
Jenn Reid, Secretary

**Women Writing for (a) Change Foundation Trustees**

Susan Branscome  
Mary Pierce Brosmer  
Marja Wade Barrett  
Beth Fritsch  
James O'Reilly

Vanessa Wynn

**Young Women Writing for (a) Change Leadership**

Jenn Reid, Director-jreid@womenwriting.org

Andrea Nichols, Community and Outreach Partnerships Coordinator

**Young Women Writing for (a) Change Faculty**

Jenn Reid

Andrea Nichols

Andrea Rotter

Sarah Hayward McCalla

Marissa McNamara

Julia Mace

Carolyn Brookbank

Stephanie Dunlap



Melissa Schwartz and Anni Gibson share writing in a small-group writing circle, Women Writing for (a) Change



Bridget Ebacher finds a solitary moment in the Weekend Writing Retreat, Moye Spiritual Center, WWf(a)C



Mary Pierce Brosmer, Founding Director



Karen Waters, Sally Schneider, Lucy Jaffe await their certificates during Feminist Leadership Academy (FLA) graduation, 2006



Mary Pierce Brosmer, (r) confers graduate shawl on Diane Debevec, while Lucy Jaffe (l) and Gail Barker celebrate during FLA Graduation 2006.



Young Women Writing for (a) Change summer writing camps bring girls and teens together to write and share in a safe and fun community setting.



WWf(a)C classrooms and offices in Silverton:  
6906 Plainfield Rd, Cincinnati, 45236