

# dignity:

creative expressions from the  
inspiration project



Spring 2019 Volume 9

## *about:*

The Inspiration Project is a volunteer collaboration between the University of Rochester and CP Rochester, a nonprofit organization that supports individuals with physical and developmental disabilities. During the spring of 2019, writing students from the University of Rochester met weekly with writers from CP Rochester. Through extensive one-on-one conversations, the UR students and CP Rochester adults have produced the creative works assembled here.

## *acknowledgments:*

This project was made possible by the hard work and generous support of many people: The consumers and staff at CP Rochester, especially Tina Bennett, Kristi Powers, and Ann Kurz, the students at the University of Rochester, Joanna Scott (Professor of English, University of Rochester), Abby Brengle (Department of English, University of Rochester), Justina McCarty, Nick Knopf (Department of English, University of Rochester), Glenn Cerosaletti (Director, Rochester Center for Community Leadership, University of Rochester), Deborah Rossen-Knill (Director, Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program, University of Rochester), Jeffrey Runner (Dean of the College, University of Rochester), Richard Feldman (interim President of the University of Rochester), Rosemary Kegl (Chair, Department of English, University of Rochester), Gloria Culver (Dean, School of Arts and Sciences).





*table of contents:*

introduction .....	3
Florida Vacation — Charlene Furhy .....	4
Debbie, My Boss — Chris Thorton .....	8
I Have Did and Done a Lot of Things in the Past; I've Been Through a Lot — Thelma Barnes .....	12
Action Club — Geraldine Copeland .....	15
Pat's Travels — Pat Hurley .....	17
Stars — Toni Montgomery .....	21
Seasons of Jeff — Jeff Yarmel .....	23
Russell's Monsters — Russell Hill .....	27
The Magical Gift of Friendship — Latrice Person .....	30

This edition of *Dignity* is dedicated to  
Victoria Bement Schramm, in memory

## *introduction*

We have been creating stories in this program for nine years to demonstrate that even if you have a challenge in your life, it doesn't mean that you can't do things. People all have challenges in their lives but it's how they conquer them that matters most. Toni and I, Professor Scott, and Kristi helped to create this project to show that you can do anything that you set your mind to, and you can always achieve your goals. We have been working very hard for nine years and we hope that you enjoy this presentation and that it'll change your life for the better. If you don't like this presentation, at least it'll change your life for a minute in time. The next time you go out in the world and you see a person with a disability, don't stare or look at them weird, but instead encourage them to be the best person that they can be in society.

We shouldn't judge people because we don't know how people live. We are just like little storytellers, trying to put things into words so everyone can read them and we can change other people's lives.

What people don't realize is that we are not only writing a story, we are also expressing ourselves through words and feelings. Sometimes it's not easy to express yourself because you might feel down or frustrated that day, but when you come to this program you can feel better about yourself. After you read what we wrote, you can have a better outlook on how people express themselves.

— Latrice Person





# Florida Vacation

By Charlene Furhy  
In collaboration with Amina N’Gambwa



One day, I got ready to go to Florida with my mom, my brother Steve, my friend Amina, and my boyfriend Tom. I never ride an airplane before so I’m not used to it, and I’m nervous a little bit. That’ll be interesting. Before we get on the plane we have to give them the ticket, and then we go to our seats. We’re sitting first class, so our seats are better and easier to get on. We get to go on the plane first because I’m in a wheelchair and I need the bathroom with the walker. I need the rail to hold on. We don’t know what number we’re sitting at, all five of us, so we ask the stewardess. We have to sit down! We can’t stand up and be drinking because the plane will move and then we’re gonna spill it!

I’m sitting near the window. I wanted to check it out because I’ve never done it before. Amina, Tom, Mom, and

Steve are sitting next to me, not too far from the aisle. My brother can lift up our suitcases and put them in the cubbyhole, or whatever they call it on the plane. We ask for the stewardess if we want something to drink or a little snack. I’ve never gone on a plane. This is something new. That’s a good thing. Something different.

I’m looking out the window and I see birds and houses because we’re up in the sky and when we look down we get to see the buildings! The buildings are small because we’re way up there. The sky is blue and there’s sunshine out there. Rochester in the winter is cold! Who wants to go out in the cold? We want to go to Florida to get warm! ‘Cause the birds come with the warm weather.

We get there in four hours. The pilots who drive it get tired. Four hours to sit

there is a long time! We just sit there and we take a nap. They give us pillows to rest till we get there because we're in first class and this is a long ride.

Going to Florida is something new for me. I'm happy that Mom is coming with me because she'll be happy to travel with me. Travelling is a little bit hard for her too, so it's good to pretend to go on a trip sometimes. Steve is smiling and happy too. He can have fun going to see things. Tom, my boyfriend, is so excited to come because it's someplace new for him to go. It'll be nice. And Amina is coming because she's working with me! She's excited she can come with me. It's nice, I like her a lot. I am happy with her, you know?

When we land we come down smoothly, and they park the wheels. I'm feeling glad and happy because I finished my first airplane ride. When we land, we see palm trees and trees with bananas and oranges and other fruits. They don't grow in Rochester, but in Florida they're really fresh. We get off the plane and the weather is very warm. I'm happy that it's warm because we don't want the cold! Then we have to get off but we can't forget our suitcases – Mom's, Tom's, mine – Steve has to get up there to reach all of them. He don't know about that yet. Big surprise!

Then we have to go to the hotel and get checked in. Steve and Tom go in the one room, and Amina and me and Mom go in the other one. Steve can help Tom out if he needs it. And Amina can help me if I need her, and she can help my mom. We sleep in the hotel like next-door neighbors so we can help each other with something.

Steve's doing all the paperwork and stuff for me in case my mom passes away or something. Steve's helping me with my mom because in the future she might pass later. But I'm not rushing her! I'm happy to spend some time with Mom in Florida. It's something different to do. It's hard to see

her now because of transportation, so this is a good thing. It's good to think of her, and just thinking about her in Florida and us being happy together and having fun and being good, it makes me happy!

Now we unpack our stuff and we put our dresses in the closet. We choose what we want to wear – don't forget the under stuff. We don't want all the men to see! Me, Amina and Mom are wearing matching pink sundresses because it's gonna be warm out there! I have pink sandals, Amina has yellow and Mom has purple. The guys can find their own stuff to wear!

Then we relax in the hotel room and lay down for a few minutes and stretch out, 'cause we were sitting on the plane for a long time. We take a nap before we go out and see things, because we got tired from just sitting there on the airplane. I'm happy and comfortable in the beds to sleep in – I don't miss my bed in Rochester 'cause we're travelling! The hotel has big rooms and big bathrooms. They have handicapped bathrooms. That would be nice, so I can get up later. It would be good, too!

After our nap, we go out to check out different things in Florida. We have money to spend! We were on the plane for quite a while so we're hungry. Ribs for dinner! They're good, something different to eat. For dessert we have ice cream because of the hot weather there – you gotta have something to cool down in there. I get chocolate ice cream and Tom does too, because he likes chocolate mousse. He has a special chocolate thing. Mom has a slice of carrot cake, because that's her favorite. Steve, I don't know what he likes so he can have a brownie. Amina has peanut butter cookies. The dessert is a good thing.

We go check out the ocean and it's sandy, so we can take our shoes off. We'll put them back on later. The sand will be in between our toes – kinda dirty. Shells and seashells and the fish like a star. The shells



are different, the shapes are different, and different colors like rainbow and shiny. Some people lay down on towels or blankets, either one, and get a sun tan. Don't forget the sun tan lotion! Don't get sunburned! Because in Florida it's warmer. The men wear bathing suits and the women also wear bathing suits and go swimming in the ocean. They like to walk in the water to go swimming.

The ocean is big, big, big water with fishes and whales. The waves, the people go out there and surf. I don't know how to surf! Amina doesn't either, so we walk up and put our feet in the water. Chilly! Steve goes surfing... well he pretends he can do it! We watch him surf and we cheer him on. It's pretty cool.

Later in the evening it gets dark out, and some days you don't know, but the moon comes out. But before the moon comes out, the sky is red and pink, and it's beautiful and pretty. It's nice to see what's out there. It's nice to see the colors change, too. When the sun comes down a little bit, it gets dark. We look up there and see things like the moon and stars. We got stars up in the sky. We are happy and calm, holding hands. Tom gives my hand a squeeze.

It's nighttime, so we gotta go to bed later, get some sleep. Amina has a dream about flowers that are pretty and come out and blossom. Different kinds, tulips and roses. She gives them to me and Mom, but no flowers for Steve and Tom! No flowers for my brother and my boyfriend. They don't know about that one!

I dream about missing part of my family, 'cause I lost my father, and my sister, and my grandparents are gone, and my cousins and my aunts. They're gone. It's hard. My uncle, too. It's hard on the holidays, like Thanksgiving and Christmas, New Years and everything. It's hard, right? It's a sad dream, because you miss them. It's hard. Maybe I can see them up there in

Heaven someday. It's gonna be a while. Then, I dream about the birds that fly with the sun and go where it's warm. That's good.

We're so excited to do something nice for the next day. We better get up and get dressed, we better put some clothes on before we go out the door! Waffles and bacon for breakfast, you gotta eat something!

Then we go shopping and look for nice things. Steve drives us in the car to the mall. Steve is a good driver. The mall is big and has a lot of stores. Lots of lights, and the people are crowded, and I need my wheelchair to go – I can't walk that far around. Steve helps Mom push on the wheelchair to help her around. She's old, and can't do too much anymore like she used to. She can walk around the house okay, but she's too old now. She gets tired. I got an electric wheelchair, so I can go around by myself.

We're looking for clothes to wear - you need clothes! Different outfits. I'm looking for a new skirt and blouse, but I don't know the new styles. I want a shirt with stripes that are pink, blue, and yellow. That'd be cute. We have to try it on to see the size. We try different ones first and then I try one and check it out, and it's nice to wear it. We gotta buy it!

We leave the store and then we cross, but it's crowded with people. Because they walk and talk, it's too crowded, and they have to watch out, you know! Finally, we get through the mall to a new store. I want a blue skirt so that it can match a little bit. It has to match a little bit. We try on skirts to make sure they fit. Oh, and don't forget shoes! Blue ones. I lost my brown ones that I bought. I have two pairs of shoes, the black ones and the brown ones, but I haven't seen the brown ones since! We have to pay for it -- don't forget that one! You

need money to buy things. Then we leave and drive to some kind of park.

The park has pretty blue skies and sunshine out there – we don't want no rain going to the picnic. We find a picnic table to sit on. The park has a swing, and we try that out a little bit. I sit on the swing, and I need a push to get a start. I think I want my brother to push me. I ask Steve if he can push the swing back and forth to move it. I swing higher and higher, and I'm comfortable and having fun.

We have to eat! We get a tablecloth and put it on the table. We take all the food out of the cooler, and paper plates and cups for a drink. We have pizza and soda. The food is good and we talk and it's nice. We're listening to country music. It's nice to relax a little bit because we got tired from the mall where we went. We play Skipbo and I try myself, but Tom wins. He's happy and nice. We finish the game, get up, go for a walk and look at the nice, pretty flowers. 'Cause we're going for a walk, but I'm using a wheelchair and they're walking. The dogs at the park have people walking them, they're cute. We ask the people if we can pet the dogs or not. The people are friendly, so maybe we can pet the dogs and it's better for both of us. We cheer them up, and they cheer us up. I miss my own at home because

mom's got our dog at home. When I come to the door, I know they're there. They are home alone so they miss someone. It's hard, you miss them too. We have to pack up the stuff from the picnic and put it away. We have Steve driving us back to the hotel.

Now, it's time to come back. We gotta check out of the hotel where we were, and put the clothes in the suitcases first before we go out. Then we go back to the airport, but we gotta get a ride to the airport, and Steve rents the car. Steve drives us there, and we give the ticket to the stewardess and help with the suitcases. Steve's gotta put our stuff up there, back on top there again before we come back. We give him a busy schedule! Our suitcases are heavy because we spent some time at the mall and bought some clothes. We sit down and strap our seatbelts on and take off. We like to think about the trip.

I never do things like ride an airplane. It's a combination a little bit, 'cause you'd like to stay longer. We can talk together from the trip. It's something different, remembering. The pilot has to land and park it. Then we get off and we go home.

We're back in Rochester, the people be happy. We're back! All of us.



# Debbie, My Boss

By Chris Thorton  
In collaboration with Shyam Bhagat



I want to tell you about Debbie, then I want to tell you about myself.

Debbie is my boss. Debbie is really nice! I've been working with Debbie for a long time. Debbie teaches me a lot about how to clean, how to behave well, how to listen, and she goes on walks with me. I work with Debbie on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. She cleans the bathrooms, makes the bed, and takes out the garbage. She also sets the table with forks, knives, and mats. She is very busy! Debbie and I work in Gates. We meet at the library in the morning, go to work, and return to the library to go home. We do that every week!

My favorite memory with Debbie was the picnic. The picnic was in the summer, and it was very warm. We sat at a picnic bench. We played basketball, kickball, walked, played frisbee, and ate food. We ate baked beans, chicken, potatoes, macaroni salad, and more! Kickball was a lot of fun. I like to roll the ball and run between the bases. Kickball is my favorite sport – it's also Debbie's! Basketball is also fun, but we never play with teams, it's more fun that way! We took a long walk by the canal. We saw ducks, we saw a bridge, and it was all really beautiful.

If I could do anything with Debbie, I think I'd do a job with her. I want to help her clean, take out the garbage, and help her out. I really like helping Debbie. I like to help Debbie because she is a lot of fun, and I like her laugh. I really like her jokes, too! I don't really tell her jokes, but I really like hers!

Debbie and I took a walk in the TIC on a Friday morning. It was a great walk. I saw my friend from Scottsville and my other friend who I work with! It was a really warm day. The walk made my day a great day! We walked to the soccer field. We didn't play any soccer, we just walked around. After that we went to work at the Cameron House in Gates. We went to the back area with the boss. We put the cans on shelves, broke down the cardboard boxes, and took them to the dumpster. Next, I served some food. There was pasta, pizza, chicken, cheeseburgers, and ham. I didn't set the table, somebody else did, but I cleaned the tables after. It is important to take the things off the table after everybody leaves. I don't know the people eating lunch that well, but serving them is fun! After the table was all clean, we put the chairs back. After we finish our work we went back to the library.

Today Debbie told me some new things. She told me don't worry about anybody else, worry about yourself. I told her that I don't tell lies, and that I don't make up stories. I am proud because I don't drive her crazy. She helped me more today. She helped with cleaning, tying my sneakers, and my behavior and attitude with other people. Sometimes she needs a little personal space and she doesn't like when people take her stuff. When Debbie tells me not to take something, I don't take anything. Debbie is really proud of me.

Debbie is the best member of our staff. Debbie taught me how to tie my shoes, count change, and helped me with my

behavior. She also helped me with my walking goals. I don't know what I want Debbie to teach me next, but I am really thankful for her.



When I am not working with Debbie I have lots of other things I like to do. Here are some of them!

I really like the library. I use the computer there. I use the computers to watch primetime football highlights. I usually don't read books and magazines because I want to watch football on the computer. My favorite team is the Buffalo Bills. I watch them every Sunday. I am at the library with my work friends, we always meet there after work.

I like all the seasons. My favorite thing about spring is when the sun shines. My favorite thing about fall is when the leaves fall. My favorite thing about winter is the heavy snow and ice. I go out and shovel in the winter. It's cold, but it's still fun. I love rain and thunderclouds. They don't scare me! In the fall I like to rake leaves. In the spring I like to pick up sticks. My favorite weather is temperature in the 90s and 100s. I like it that way because you can go swimming. I love swimming, not at the beach, but at the pool. The pool is in Syracuse, my aunt lives there. I don't sit still in the pool, I like to swim around. Sometimes I eat chocolate ice cream. I prefer eating my ice cream in a Dixie cup, ice cream in a cone melts all over my hands.



Swimming and chocolate ice cream aren't the reason summer is my favorite season, my birthday is!

My birthday is a lot of fun. On my birthday I go to my wife Angie's house and I have a party there. We watch DVDs and eat snacks: cheeseburgers, soda, and cake. My birthday is on July 21st. I'm 33. My sister Molly and my brother Pat come to my birthday. I am the oldest sibling! My sister's birthday is on October 19th and my brother's is on May 27th. Molly has a dog named Lacy. Lacy is a medium brown dog. I like petting and playing with Lacy sometimes. When I try to eat, she begs for food, but I don't give her any because I eat people food and she eats dog food. Lacy is a crazy and nice dog, she jumps on people sometimes!

Christmas is one of my favorite holidays. So is Thanksgiving. My favorite part about Christmas is the presents. My favorite presents are headphones, DVDs, and chocolate. I don't have a favorite chocolate, I like all of them. I also like bringing snacks to my room. I bring chips, pretzels, and bananas. My favorite thing about Thanksgiving is the food. Especially turkey, stuffing, rolls, apple pie, and casserole. I also like watching football with my family during Thanksgiving.

Another fun thing I like to do with my family is go to WWE matches! I watched WWE when my sister Molly got tickets to go watch it. I don't really like watching WWE on TV, but I like watching shows in real life. My brother also went with us. The WWE match was a lot of fun! It was my first time, so I don't remember a lot of the wrestlers. The music was really loud, but I like loud music. It was really exciting. I like some of the wrestlers, but I don't like others. My favorite wrestlers are the Belle Sisters. They are my favorite because every time they have a match they win, and they are friends with the other wrestlers. I have

not met any wrestlers in person, but I am going to a match this week. I hope I can get an autograph. I might even be on TV.

My favorite games are Candy Land, Uno, and Chutes and Ladders. I like Candy Land because it is new to me, I have never played it before. I like Uno because I play it with my friends when we get snowed in the house. I also use my computer when we get snowed in. I watch Patriots games and Steelers games, just like in the library. Sometimes, I really like being snowed in. I get to go outside and shovel. We work together to shovel the walkway, the deck, and the driveway. It isn't hard work because my friend Pat and I work together.

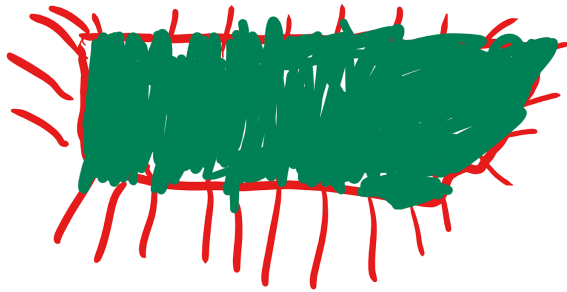
My favorite restaurant is the Cheesecake Factory. My favorite cake is chocolate cake. My other favorite foods are pizza, cheeseburgers, macaroni and cheese, and french fries. For breakfast I prefer bacon and eggs. The foods I don't like are apples and salads. I eat my favorite foods a lot. My favorite burgers are from Burger King and Wendy's. I like to have coffee at Starbucks and I also help serve it. During the summer I like a cold 7-Up, but no ice.

I don't get bored. I always keep myself busy. I have to go to my appointments, and I have to cook, so I'm busy. I cook macaroni and cheese, pizza, and pasta. Sometimes we go the park in Gates and we play basketball. We just shoot the ball around. Kevin Durant is my favorite player, so I try to be like him when I shoot. I also need to watch Patriots games and Steelers games. My favorite football player is EJ Manuel. He is my favorite because he is really good, he makes a lot of touchdowns. During the week there are no sports, so I watch Cops. I also watch the Golden Girls. My favorite movies are Home Alone I and Home Alone II. I like them because I have the DVDs in my room and because they're really funny, they make me laugh!

I went to high school at Mendon High School. My favorite part of school was learning math. I also liked reading. My favorite book was a picture book about animals. My favorite teacher was Ms. McCarthy. She was my favorite because she was my teacher for a long time. She taught me math and reading. I also liked science and social studies. I also really liked writing. That is why I'm writing this story! I miss going to school sometimes. I miss all my

teachers at school. I don't think I would go back, because it was a long time ago. My school was really big. There were a lot of kids and a lot of teachers. Even though I miss my old teachers, I have new teachers now, like Debbie.

I have a very fun and exciting life, and lots of friends! I hope you enjoyed reading about my life, I really enjoyed writing for you.



# I Have Did and Done a Lot of Things in the Past; I've Been Through a Lot

By Thelma Barnes

In collaboration with Lucinda Hinojosa



This is the story of the life I have lived and am living. I know everything I have been through is a lot, but I am still trying to live a happy life. I am trying to not give up, because I believe in God. I have faith in God. He will stand by me and keep me happy. I gotta have faith in God!

The truth is that I have had a pretty hard life. I grew up in North Carolina. I lived with my mom, grandma, and my aunts. I also grew up with Kurt, my aunt's son that was raised alongside me. My aunt left her son with us and went to live in Rochester. From the age of twelve, I have had seizures,

and was picked on by the kids at school. I had to leave my mom and come live with my aunt in Rochester at the age of seventeen. I was on my own and sometimes my aunt and I did not get along. My aunt had a boyfriend that tried to make advances on me but I did not want them. I told my aunt about them but she did not believe me, because of this I had to not live with her anymore.

At age twenty-two, my beautiful daughter Katina was born. I had to let my aunt take care of my daughter even though I did not want to because of my seizures. I did

not like this. At twenty-eight, I was shot by a man that wanted to have sex with me but I did not want him. I had a boyfriend. I didn't believe it. I didn't think he would try would kill me, because I'm not that kind of person, the type of person who would be thinking of killing a person. I'm a church person. I don't like hating anybody. I went to the hospital and my head was shaved where the bullet was taken out. I wasn't able to take care of my daughter. My aunt had to take care of her. My daughter got mad at me because she was young and she didn't know any better. My aunt put her against me. She didn't have a daughter and wanted to take her from me, and I did not want to let her. I had her, and she is mine. Her father might have left me, but she is still mine. I felt that.

Before I got shot, I used to go out with friends to the clubs, and one day I met a person who took me to church. Her name is Renee, and she taught me that sometimes it's more important to go to church, and it's not so good to go to the clubs too much. After I got shot, some of my old friends walked off and gave me up, and only my church friends stayed with me. A good friend stands by you even in the hard times. My church friends are good friends.

It was during this time that I got close to God. I learned a lot of things by praying to God, having faith in God. I just kept the faith and let God take care of me. I feel good about treatment, praying at church, requesting things from God, and having faith in God. I feel very happy. With God, I wake up and feel happy every day about myself. I wish I could go to church even more, every Sunday. If I could, I would go every day! I always continue to go to church when I can and keep praising God. I let him take care of me and know that he will because I have faith in him, because I feel it. I feel really special inside the church. I am close with the preacher. I have known him for a long time and he has always given me

great advice. Sometimes there is drama in the church. It keeps it exciting. I tell everybody the same thing. I love my church. I pray to God at home, sometimes by myself. That Man up there knows everything: what we need and don't need.

Other than church, I go to the program UCP. I really love the program. I would go to the program on weekends, if they had it. I don't like sitting around and doing nothing. I sit and talk with people. I do different things and we sit and talk and socialize. I feel very happy talking to different people.

Renee, a friend of mine that knows me good went to see my daughter sometime after I was shot, and she talked to her and told her she should come talk to me and see me. My daughter was in her 20s and was married. We talked about different things and caught up. I see my daughter and her family on special occasions. I have two grandboys and a great granddaughter. I wish I could see her more and hear from her more. Sometimes I have to tell her talk is cheap, she knows what to do and not to do. My daughter knows what I have been through, and I think she would be proud of me for trying to live my best life. I keep talking to my daughter when she calls and let her know the way I feel and it keeps me happy. It's a better life to live.

I am proud of myself, because I say what I feel. Sometime they might show me stuff that I have already learned. They think that just because I am in a wheelchair in this condition that I might not understand, but my mind is fine. I don't like to be treated as a child, because I am not that! People pick what they want, and I tell them how I feel, but they get mad at me sometimes. They try to take advantage because they say they know. "You don't know what I want," I tell them.

I know what I need and don't need, and they get angry sometimes. That's not

right! Nobody knows what I want, until you ask. Because of my age I should know, they get angry with me. And even if they say “Oh you are right,” they don’t get me and say that I am wrong. If I am right, they won’t really say it. If I see that something is wrong I will speak up about it because that is who I am!

I have a lot of patience. I tell myself, thank God I have a lot of patience! I learned it the hard way, because I have been through stuff. It took some time to get here. Some days I cried, but then I thought what can I do? I can’t get too defeated and think it’s hard. I just gotta wait and be patient. I tell that to other people. We all have to be patient. I can’t do anything but be patient. It’s hard but you have to. I had no choice,

but I can choose what I think and feel. But I do have some bad days. I try to cheer myself up with church, shopping, getting my hair done, and dinners with Pam. I try to do the stuff that I like. I love soul food and barbeque. I’ve been to a lot of places. I even went to a picnic at the beach over the summer.

I am so proud of myself because I love myself even after everything that I have been through. I am proud to do things like this, come here, and write my story to share with my friends. I am happy to make friends, I love to meet new people.

*There always more to my life. It’s a hard life, but a good life. I have been through a lot.*





# Action Club

By Geraldine Copeland  
In collaboration with Rebecca Reef



Hi everyone, my name is Geraldine. Once upon a time, there was the best club ever. It is called Action Club. This is my story about Action Club and why I love it. It is such a great program, we do all different kinds of projects for the community. My favorite part is meeting new people. I get to hang out with the new friends I meet by visiting their homes.

It all started with Jamie and Jordan. Jamie and Jordan are married and they are the best because they help us with all kinds of projects. Without them, we wouldn't have Action Club! I have a lot of friends in Action Club. We have 14 people in it. My friends in Action Club are so supportive, everyone helps each other out when we need it. People even called me after my surgery to make sure I was okay. Some of my friends' names are Ruth, Jim, Tiana, Charlene, Chris,

Jane, Joseph, and David. I love to do projects with them. Everyone tells jokes and makes me laugh. They are all super great people who are fun to be with. We are all glad it is almost spring – I don't like winter weather. I think we get to do more projects when it is nice outside.

We do so many cool projects in Action Club. We do a lot of things for so many people. We do fundraisers, but also just fun stuff for ourselves. We raise money for people who need it by doing car washes and spaghetti dinners. At the car washes, I collect the money. It makes me feel important. I feel happy and relaxed when I do it. I like to do math. At the spaghetti dinners, I help Jamie get things ready by helping with the tables. Sometimes we make scarves, quilts, placemats, and bookmarks. We knit and donate quilts to people who

don't have a warm thing on their bed. We make bookmarks for a library. We celebrate people's birthdays. We do more placemat painting. We go to baseball games during the summer. Another thing we do is collect pop caps for the Ronald McDonald House charity. We do more projects than we can handle. We do a lot!

A few weeks ago, we went bowling. We bowled two games, and then we had pizza, pop, and cake. The cake was chocolate with white icing — it had the same stuff in the cake that is in a Boston cream donut. It tasted just like the donut, to tell you the truth, and it made me very happy.

You know what else? We put in a swing at the park last year. I felt happy because we got to get on, and swing on it, back and forth. I loved it. It was a glider, and the people from Channel 10, and Channel 13, and my neighbor across the street were there, and boy do I feel happy about that. It was on TV too!

Last weekend, we collected one thousand dollars for Golisano Hospital. We are donating the money because they want to make the hospital bigger. But guess what? It's already HUGE! If they make it any bigger, it will be hard to get around in it. We collected the money at Eastview Mall. I felt great collecting the money. I walked back and forth from the food court to collect it. It was special to ask people to donate. If they said no, I still said thank you anyways, to be polite. This was a special trip because Action Club got to go out to lunch together afterwards. That felt good!

I feel like I am doing a great job in Action Club by helping Jamie. I help out

with organizing the money and with whatever there is to sell. I just love that. I am feeling super about myself because I am in it. I feel so happy that we have more people in Action Club like Tiana and Charlene. I feel so good about that.

My favorite time in Action Club was when I started. I started with nothing at all. I had to learn what to do. I had to learn how to do the projects right. All of them. I felt good learning. We do all kinds of projects, like making scarves to donate to people who need them. I made 10 scarves!

Right now, I am secretary. In the future, I hope to become president of the club. I want to do more projects in Action Club. If I were president, I would teach people how to do things right like pounding nails into chairs when you build them. Another idea that I have is to raise money for the creative writing program. We could make birdhouses to sell for money to donate to the creative writing program. I love the creative writing program. I have so many good ideas because I love the club. It makes me feel so good. Like I said before, we wouldn't have Action Club without Jamie and Jordan. Jamie and Jordan, you are very special to all of us and we love you. Thank you to everyone who read my story about Action Club.

# Pat's Travels

By Pat Hurley  
In collaboration with Maggie Perry



This is a collection of some of my favorite memories from vacations that I have been on. I've been on a lot of vacations. I really like going on vacations because I like doing stuff. They are a lot of fun – we eat, we go out for drinks, sometimes there is a pool, I get to spend time with Eileen and my family, and I enjoy the memories that I make. One of my favorite vacations listed below is Florida, but it is one of many that I have been on and enjoyed. I choose to write about my travels because I like being able to have a collection of all of my memories in one place. It's a great story to have, and I'm

excited to share my adventures with all of you!

## *Tampa Bay, Florida*

My sister Eileen's friend has an apartment and let us use it when we visited Tampa Bay, Florida. The apartment was on the beach, and there was also a pool outside. It was nice out when we visited. We didn't drive to Florida, we took a plane! The flight was about three hours long and my sister's friends picked us up from the airport.

When we were there we went on a bike ride. My bike was different than the rest of the bikes. I had one tire in front, and two in the back. The handlebars were connected to the brakes, so I could stop if I needed to. The bike also had a basket, so I could keep my coat in it. I had a lot of fun! The bike path took us over a canal and there was a drawbridge that would come up when boats needed to get through. There was a big boat coming, but I was able to press the brakes and stop the bike in time, so the boat could go through the canal when the bridge was up.

We went swimming a lot, and it was really nice to use the pool. It was outside. It was nice and warm in Florida, so swimming was very refreshing. I had different glasses to wear in the water. We also took walks on the beach! We walked, we saw a lot of people, and we saw a lot of seashells. It was so much warmer in Tampa Bay than it is in Rochester!

### *Ireland*

When I was in my twenties, I went on another vacation. This time we went to Ireland. I went with my family (my parents, and some of my siblings). Eileen also came! We decided to go to Ireland because we wanted to have fun! We went on a plane to get there. The plane was a 747 and it was a big plane. I had a window seat. We drove to New York City from Rochester, and then got on the plane from there!

When we got to Ireland we rented a van at the airport because we had so much luggage. They drive on the other side of the road! That was a little confusing for us. We rented an old house to stay in. It was a farm and there were a lot of cows.

When we were in Ireland we walked around. We did a LOT of walking. We had lunch in a park, we also went out to eat a lot. We had an Irish specialty of cabbage and corned beef. I really liked it! I really like

spending time with my family. When we were there we also went on a tour of the cliffs. It was really pretty. We went shopping, and I bought a shirt and a hat. The hat was a baseball cap and it was green. One day we went to Church. We did a LOT in Ireland. Overall it was a great time, and I'm so happy I got to experience it.

### *Los Angeles, California*

Another trip my sister Eileen and I went on was to California about 15 years ago. We took a plane to get there, and it was a long plane ride. We stayed in a really cool hotel where there was even a hot tub! We rented a car in California. It was white and it was cool, we drove around a lot. This time it wasn't confusing, because we drove on the same side of the road (not like in Ireland!). My sister made a wrong turn, and then a cop pulled her over, but she didn't get a ticket. We went to the Jay Leno Show that day, they were filming for it. We also watched a guy sing country music. This was all on the same day.

The weather in California was great! It was nice and warm, and I enjoyed being able to see the sun. If I had the chance, it would be great to live in California (better than the cold in Rochester!). When we were in California we saw the big Hollywood sign, it was really cool. We also went to the beach where they filmed the old show Baywatch, and we saw the pickup truck that goes with it. I really like the show Baywatch, and I once got a set of the Baywatch DVDs for Christmas! It was really cool to see the place where it was filmed. We also took a trip to Disneyland. We walked around, and I really like all of the Disney Characters! Every night for dinner we went out to eat, so I was able to eat a lot of good food. One of my favorite foods to eat are burgers - I like cheeseburgers and hamburgers with beer.

### *Bills Game (Buffalo, New York)*

My sister Anna and I went to the Bills game together. The Bills won at the game we were at, which was really exciting! We also had really good seats, and the weather was great, and it was sunny, which is always nice! It was really loud in the stadium, there was a ton of cheering, and it was fun to cheer along with everyone! We had a lot of good food - we had burgers that we bought from the snack shack.

I really like football. I'm a big fan of the Bills, so it was really exciting to be able to go to the game! Sometimes I play football with my family members, and my nieces and nephews. It's really fun to play with everyone in a big football game!

### *Boston, Massachusetts*

About 15 years ago, my sister Eileen and I went to Boston together. We drove to Boston and we were there for a week. We went to Boston to visit our niece Monica, and her fiancé Kevin, and we were able to stay in her apartment. We went to Boston in November because we had to set the clocks back when we were there. It was so nice to get an extra hour of sleep! The leaves were also changing colors, so it was really pretty outside and nice to walk around in! We walked around a lot in Boston. We also went shopping when we were there in Faneuil Hall which is a huge area of shops, and it's right by the water! We stopped for ice cream during the trip. We ate dinner at a restaurant named Cheers which is named after the TV show, Cheers which is a comedy show that has to do with an ex-Boston Red Sox pitcher. This is one of my favorite shows!

### *Canada*

Another vacation I went on was to Canada, and I took a train to Canada by myself. I liked taking the train by myself. I listened to music to entertain myself when I was on the train. I went to visit my brother,

and when I went to visit him he lived in an apartment (he doesn't live in an apartment anymore though). It was a long time ago.

Another time I went to Canada was with my sister Eileen to visit my brother again. We drove to Canada this time. My brother has a pool and it is outside. We went swimming because it was during the summer when we went. We ate dinner at my brother's house a lot too. We saw Niagara Falls, which was really cool! It was so interesting to see everything, we even got a little wet from the water coming off the Falls.

### *Washington D.C.*

Another time I drove with my sister Eileen to Washington D.C. My sister Eileen stayed with relatives who took me to the airport to take a plane back home by myself. I was coming back up to Rochester, but my sister had to stay because she was doing something in D.C. I don't get scared, so it wasn't scary taking a plane by myself. It was actually fun to be independent!

When we were in D.C. we went out to eat a lot. We also went to some museums and we saw the outside of the White House! It was really cool to see the White House in person instead of just seeing it in pictures.

### *Nashville, Tennessee*

I have also been to Nashville, Tennessee. I went with my sister Eileen (we really like to travel together!). I was in my 20s or 30s when we went. We drove to Nashville all the way from Rochester. It was a long car ride, and it was just me and my sister. It took about 12 hours to drive and on the way there we stopped to get lunch, we just stopped somewhere off the highway. We stayed at a hotel in Nashville.

I had fun when I was in Nashville. I did karaoke in Nashville, I love country music so it was really fun to sing along. I sang to Billy Ray Cyrus songs. I like to



listen to country music on the radio at work, but I keep the volume down so I don't disturb anyone. One of my favorite artists is Little Big Town, and I have a lot of their CDs. We ate a lot of good food in Nashville, and also drank beer. Some of our food highlights of this trip included fried chicken! After we ate dinner we would go back to the hotel to sleep.

#### *Rochester, New York*

Although my home is here in Rochester, I still am able to explore and make lots of memories! I get to see my mom every Saturday, she is at Saint John's Meadows. I get to eat lunch with my mom. My mom and I are close, so I'm happy that I get to see her. I also usually stay for dinner, we eat a lot of good food! I really like going to see her.

A special memory I have from Rochester is spending holidays with my family. My family and I always spend Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter together. We used to celebrate all of these holidays at our house in Mendon. All 10 of my siblings were there, and both of my parents. Over the years, my siblings' spouses and children would join us as well. I really like spending time with my family.

One year I ran the Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving with my sister Mary in Rochester, and one time I ran another Turkey Trot in Westport. It was pretty cold that day, but we had a lot of food to look forward to. I also had two cups of coffee to look forward to, because I wasn't allowed to drink coffee before the race. I really enjoy running, I think that it is fun! I also really enjoy the sport of swimming. After the race we had Thanksgiving Dinner, which we

celebrated with my whole family. We had turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and (the best part of the meal!) dessert, which was pumpkin pie! To drink we also had beer. My favorite Thanksgiving dish is turkey.

#### *Special Olympics*

I did a lot of sports with Special Olympics. The sports I did included softball, swimming, track, basketball, and bowling. I really liked the sport of bowling, it was my favorite one. I like working out, so doing sports was really fun. We bowl with the bumpers up and I'm pretty good at bowling, I get a lot of strikes! Sometimes we go bowling with the Aquantis group. We also did basketball at Edison Tech, which is a school in the area. We practiced a lot with a team there! I enjoy basketball, it was really fun because I like playing on a team. Sometimes I also take dance classes in the cafeteria of Edison Tech. I like dancing because of all the different songs. I have also won a bunch of ribbons for all of the different sports with Special Olympics.

#### *Conclusion*

I really like doing this program! It's fun to be able to write down a bunch of my memories, and I hope that you were able to enjoy my memories as well! It's so great to read about all my travels and have them all in the same place. I really like spending time with my family and friends, I like exploring new places, and I like all of the activities that I get to participate in. It's fun to break out of the normal routine by going on all these trips. Enjoy reading about more travels in the future, and I hope you get to enjoy great trips like I did!

# Stars

By Toni Montgomery  
In collaboration with Lilia Frank



Once upon a time, there were three actors named Tyler Perry, Toni Montgomery, and Oprah Winfrey. They were best friends. One day, they were in Toni's office, and Toni was telling Oprah and Tyler about *Stars*, a book she wrote about how she became a star and met Tyler Perry and Oprah Winfrey. Toni has a pink office, pink desk, pink chairs. There is a big picture of her on the wall. Her name is on her door, and there is a Hollywood star with her name on it. There are pink rugs, and a pink glass of rum and Coke in the small freezer on the floor.

There was a big line outside of Toni's office. Everyone wanted Toni to sign their copy of *Stars*. There were paparazzi all around the office building, crowding at the windows. "Toni!" they yelled.

Bodyguards were waiting around the doors and windows, yelling "Move along! Move along, people! Toni didn't star in five movies and write a bestselling book just to deal with you people all day!"

Toni's books are in boxes. Tyler Perry was the first one to read her book. The book starts with the first letter Toni ever wrote to Tyler Perry:

*Dear Tyler Perry,*

*I want to meet you because I like movies, and your movies are the best! You were a big inspiration to me on my path to becoming an actress. Your story helped me see that even when you think your life is over and you've hit rock bottom, you can*

*still reach the stars and achieve all your dreams.*

*Signed, Toni  
P.S. Give me a gift!*

This is the story Toni sent him:

When I was young, I was not doing so great. I had to spend most of my time around people who were mean. There was this one woman who always hit me. I did not know why she did that, but I did know that it made me feel really scared and like I had no control over my life.

One time, I was visiting my friend. He was a local acting director. I was having a bad day. The woman threw me on the ground. Hit me on the head with the big sharp heel of a boot, and left my whole body bruised. Everything hurt. "Listen," he said, "It seems like you could use some better people in your life. We need someone to play Madea in my next play, and I think you would be great!"

I had never been in a play, but I decided to try. Anything to escape those mean people! And it did help me escape. Just like Tyler Perry's movies did. His movies always made me laugh, no matter how sad I was.

It always looked like he was having so much fun acting and playing Madea. I thought it could be fun for me, too. I was sweating like crazy during my first performance, but I killed it! One man in the audience laughed so hard that he almost fainted. Everyone heard about it, and the

next show sold out. When five more shows sold out, my director friend came up to me and said, "You've got it, Toni. You've got the talent. I love having you in my plays, but you should do more! Tyler Perry got sick and he needs someone else to play Madea in his next movie. I think you should give it a shot."

When Tyler Perry opened my letter and the packet of my story, he was also inspired. "Woowwww!" he said as he read my story.

Tyler Perry also had a hard life before he got famous. He was a homeless guy in a car. That story was in the newspaper after he told the press when he got famous.

Tyler Perry's a good guy. He's in the movies a lot!

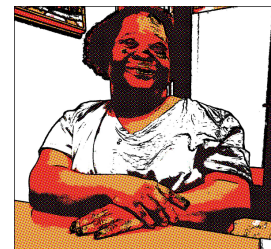
*Dear Toni,*

*Thank you! Most of this is a true story. I studied your story. Write more! Send me more of your stories so that we can make them into movies. Also, I want you to meet my friend Oprah sometime. I think you would like each other and have a lot to talk about.*

*From, Tyler Perry*

*P.S. Sign your book and send it to me!*

"And we did," Oprah said, drinking rum and Coke from one of the pink glasses in the pink office. "And I'm so happy about that."



# Seasons of Jeff

By Jeff Yarmel

In collaboration with Pamela Chan and Ally Dimauro



## *Table of Contents*

1. Inspiration Project & Introduction
2. Summer
3. Everyone
4. Fall
5. Workshop
6. My Room
7. Alexa
8. Winter
9. Marcus
10. Spring

## *Inspiration Project & Introduction*

My name is Jeff. I have been a part of the Inspiration Project for many years. I like doing it because it is fun. Once, I came to a reading, and I liked it a lot. Marcus

brought me to it. I like being on campus at the University of Rochester. It is big and nice. We take a 2019 van to get here. We got a new van this year. I like it better than the old van. It is bigger and taller. It is black.

My favorite seasons are summer and fall and spring. I do not like winter!

I was thinking about talking about my house. I live at Benedict Road. I live with 12 people (including me). My room is blue. I joke with everyone and I like to listen to jokes.

My house is big and cool. We have fun. Everyone makes cookies and cake for peoples' birthdays and we sing Happy Birthday to them. I like milk with my cookies on my birthday.

### *Summer*

I hang out outside in the yard when it's warm. Some people like to sunbathe outside. I like to go on walks on the hills. I have a blue three-wheel bike. I like to ride my bike. I am the only one who has a bike. I used to have a different bike in Long Island, but someone took it. That's okay, the new bike was free. And the old bike was a pain to fix, anyway.

I like to look out my window and I see trees that are tall. I mostly leave my window closed, even in the summer, because the house has air conditioning. I have my own room but other people have to share. I am lucky because only three people have their own room.

### *Everyone*

I like the homemade meals the staff makes for everyone. One staff is a great cook. Her name is Neisha. Everything she cooks is great: mac and cheese, breakfast, waffles and pancakes, milky ways, chocolate, and lasagna. But I don't like eggs or oxtails.

I love all the meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I sit with two friends. Betty is one of them. I sit by a window, in a corner farther from the TV, and I like it that way.

We play cards. Everyone's favorite game to play is Uno.

We have movie nights every weekend in the living room. Sometimes we watch Lifetime movies. Those are everyone else's favorites, but not mine. We don't get popcorn, but that's okay because I don't like popcorn; it gets stuck in my teeth. I like eating candy during movie night, but I LOVE eating chips. I like all flavors besides plain.

### *Fall*

I see lots of bunnies and deer in the fall. There are pet deer outside in the front and back yard, everywhere. I was coming

home with my dad once, and we saw three deer. They had antlers. They were eating grass. There are also squirrels in the yard.

I like to see the leaves change from my window. They start off green and then they change to yellow, then orange, then red, then brown. Then they fall to the lawn. We have a guy who cuts the grass and removes the leaves.

I like to eat apple pie with vanilla ice cream. Or chocolate. Any flavor. Other kinds of pies are just okay. I also like pumpkin pie.

I like to carve pumpkins, but I don't like Halloween or Trick-or-Treating. I don't like them because I think they are silly. But I love Halloween candy. I have been on a hayride twice and I liked it. I have been in a haunted house twice and I did not like it; it was too scary, but I did not scream.

I like Thanksgiving. I go home for Thanksgiving. My mom, my dad, my uncle, my aunt, and I celebrate all day. We eat all the food on Thanksgiving. I am thankful for my family. I am thankful for my CP Rochester family. I am thankful for dogs.

### *Workshop*

At workshop I made a little clock. I made it out of wood. I am going to paint it, but I don't know which color yet. It tells time. It's for the house. I am going to put it in the kitchen. I'm not done with it. I am going to work on it more later. It's a small clock. It uses batteries, but I don't know which kind. My friend from workshop helped me. His name is Steve.

My friends' names are Tony, David, Steve, Marty, Matt, Jennie, and Harry.

Tony is older than I am. I think Tony is 95 years old. Tony sends me emails. Tony is a World War II veteran, and was a Nazi prisoner. Tony has glasses like me. David is funny. He tells lots of jokes. He also wears glasses like me. Steve has glasses too. He helps me to use tools. Marty is older than I



am. He has made something for me before in workshop. Then there is Matt. I was helping him to make a big box. Jennie loves art. I have seen her make art. Jennie likes to paint. She has painted a birdhouse that I built. Then there is Harry. Harry was also in World War II, like Tony. Harry likes to make tables that connect to wheelchairs. I help him make the wheelchair tables. I tell him what height to make the tables. I like workshop because we all get to work together.

### *My Room*

In my room I have a TV, a closet, drawers, a table, and one stuffed animal.

I like to play on my iPad in my room. I built a wooden box that I keep chargers in. I charge my iPad at night. I play a game on my iPad called "Tapped Out." In the game, you have a neighborhood, you collect money, and you build houses. I also play "Candy Crush" and "Hay Day" on my iPad. I can text from my iPad. I text everyone.

I watch TV in my room. I like watching Nascar. On Sundays, I watch the races, and I like all the drivers. The race starts at 1 or 3 or 7 o'clock. I like to watch anything on my TV, just not movies. Those are for movie night. Family Feud is a show that I like to watch. I like Steve Harvey. I like to watch game shows.

I watched the show called Dogs on Netflix. I saw the show with the service dog. It was a cute dog. My favorite kind of dog. I like yellow labs the most.

### *Alexa*

I love listening to music in my room (see my Alexa playlist)

Alexa ... play Phil Collins  
Alexa... volume up  
Alexa ... play Billy Joel on Pandora  
Alexa... volume up

Alexa ... play 101.3 radio  
Alexa ... beatbox

Alexa is good at beatboxing. I like when she beatboxes. It's funny. She beatboxes for a couple minutes at a time.

Alexa tells me funny jokes. Alexa tells knock knock jokes and chicken crossing the road jokes.

I also play 20 questions with Alexa. Alexa is funny; she gets me to wake up because she is my alarm.

### *Winter*

I like snow sometimes. But I do not like the Rochester weather. No one knows how to start the snow blower but me, so I have to do it every time. This is why I only like snow sometimes.

If I could live anywhere, I would live somewhere warm, maybe near the beach because I like the sand and I like to tan. When I go to the beach I bring sandwiches, water, and sunscreen.

I have to get up at 6:30 or 8 in the morning to start the snow blower.

One staff told someone to come get me when they couldn't start the snow blower. I am always very helpful. I think they need a class on how to start the snow blower. After I started the snow blower, I told them go hold the two handles so one person can drive it and the second person can throw the snow far away. Only one staff knows how to use the snow blower.

Some people help decorate our home for Christmas. I help decorate too. We get two Christmas trees and we exchange gifts. I once gave someone a funny hat. It was a joker hat with bells hanging off of it. My favorite gift this year was a set of two \$25 gift cards. I bought black headphones with them. I use them every day. I use them to listen to music. I use them to watch Netflix on my iPad. I use them when I video-chat on Facetime.

### *Marcus*

Marcus has been at CP Rochester for 21 years. He is funny. He tells lots of kinds of jokes. He works with us a lot. He works with all of us on how to be happy. He jokes a lot.

He is the one that knows how to start the snow blower, and he taught me how. He is a good teacher. Two of us know how to start the snow blower because of Marcus. He has dinner with us and asks us about our days and that makes me feel good.

Marcus has also seen the deer, but I don't know if he likes them. Every time we go for a walk we see deer with antlers!

I like to watch game shows with Marcus and sometimes even movie nights. Marcus goes on walks with three of us. When we walk, we talk about everything. We talk especially about the work day and what was good, and what was bad. When we go outside, we go up a hill. I use my bike and Marcus walks. Marcus is a cool guy to hang out with.

Today (March 28, 2019) is his 21-year anniversary of working at CP Rochester. He told me. They did something at work for him. They had a work party. I heard them in his room having a party.

Marcus has three kids. I have met them at my house. Two girls, one boy. They were nice and polite.

### *Spring*

Now that it is spring, we are setting up a basketball hoop. I like watching people play basketball. Someone got the basketball hoop for Christmas. It feels like it's 46 feet tall. I am nervous to play with it. I have played basketball before, but I don't remember the last time I played. We have a lot of cars in the driveway. All the cars belong to the staff. I like trucks and race cars. If I could drive any car, I would want to drive a blue truck.

In May, we get mom birds outside.

We have one nest still left over from last spring. It is very big! One year we had a pet duck. The duck had babies. And then we had another pet bird that had babies. The bird mom was 15 feet away from me and the nest was in the gutter of our house. The bird mom was walking with food for the babies. I was sitting by the babies and I could see them and they looked small and they had a couple feathers on their bodies.

We color eggs at my house in the spring. I like to color my eggs a lot of different colors. I like to dip the same egg in lots of different dyes. At the the end, it turns dark blue. I don't eat the eggs because I don't like eggs. Coloring eggs is fun. We do not do egg hunts. We have a big dinner instead for Easter. I go home for Easter dinner and we go to my aunt and uncle's house. They cook for us. My aunt and uncle are 10 minutes away from me. I like going to see them with my parents. They have a dog named Sibley.

I can't wait until it becomes 60 degrees or warmer outside so that I can go outside and ride my bike.

*The End.*



# Russell's Monsters

By Russell Hill

In collaboration with Leena Khoury and Nawshin Sharif



You know there's a lot of monsters. Godzilla was like a giant lizard. The new Godzilla is like higher than a building. His scales are brownish. The old Godzilla had spikes over his head, but not the new Godzilla. I like both. I never feel scared while watching Godzilla. The old Godzilla likes the water as well as the new one. Giant splash! Godzilla lives in the water and then comes on land. He eats a lot of fish. Two fishermen angered Godzilla. All these fishermen made Godzilla mad. I remember the old man hurt Godzilla with a pole, and Godzilla came out of the water because he was angry. Godzilla came out on the bridge and crushed cars into the buildings. Godzilla came around the other side of the building, and tore through the building using his tail.

Then he went into the tunnel to hide because he did not want to be bothered. I like Puff Daddy's song from the original Godzilla. He sings at the end of the movie. The humans were fighting him. They shot him up in the air. He died in the water.

Guess what?! King Kong fights Godzilla! I like both of them. It's in a movie, a long time ago. It is an exciting fight. They are fighting each other to find out who is the most monstrous. The fight occurs in Japan and they are smashing through buildings as they fight. Godzilla breathes fire. King Kong has electricity on his hands like a thunderstorm that he uses when he touches Godzilla. He's like a king or a god. King Kong is taller than Godzilla. He's smart like a dog. King Kong is stronger

because he has electricity in his hands. The people living in Japan knew that the fight was happening so they left. This is only about monsters. King Kong likes bananas. Godzilla likes eating meat. They are both different. That's a good thing!

Godzilla is almost like a dragon. Dragons look like a giant bird because they have wings. But dragons can breathe fire. They are not scary, instead, they are friendly. Some dragons live in China. Dragons are all different colors, like red or brown. I just think about them breathing and spitting fire. They are strong and powerful. The only enemy a dragon has is another dragon. When I imagine it, two dragons are fighting. The red dragon and the brown dragon are fighting, but they both win at the end. I have a book about dragons called the Jade of Dragons. There is a human girl in it. The girl is best friends with both the red and brown dragons. It would be nice to be friends with dragons like she is, because I love dragons.

Sometimes, machines are monsters. Like Mechagodzilla! It's like a robot Godzilla. They are different from Transformers, but I'll talk about that in a second. Mechagodzilla was made by G-force in the lab. It looks like a heavy machine and is taller than Godzilla. It is made of metal and it is shiny. Godzilla and robot Godzilla are different for other reasons, too. The real Godzilla can swim in water, but the Mechagodzilla cannot. They each fight different dinosaurs but they don't fight each other. Yup! If they fought each other, Mechagodzilla would be stronger than regular Godzilla. In the tales of Godzilla, they fight other monsters too, like a giant turtle named Gamera and a giant lobster. Godzilla always wins.

Ooh. Transformers are a little bigger than Mechagodzilla. The Bee is my favorite, because he looks like a bumblebee. Some of them are cars, and some of them are trucks.

Transformers are not like humans, because they are all made out of technology. They are the same size, but they come in different colors. Sometimes they fight each other. They're not scary. They don't fight humans, instead, they protect them. They are machines that have guns for hands. Some of them are bulletproof. Transformers live on every planet. All of them are good ones. I think dinosaurs are stronger than Transformers.

A long time ago, my father gave me a Jurassic Park shirt over Christmas. I have a dinosaur book that is about a T-Rex. Jurassic World is my favorite! It has a volcano and lots of dinosaurs. The dinosaurs are almost friendly but sometimes they fight with each other. The skin of dinosaurs is very bumpy, just like other reptiles. You know I love dinosaurs! Especially the T-Rex. They like eating meat. The teeth of T-Rex look like an alligator's. There's a T-Rex in Jurassic Park: the Lost World too. The army puts the T-Rex in a glass cage, which already makes her mad. Then, a man in the US Army tried to steal her baby. To save her baby, the T-Rex breaks the glass. She doesn't want the Army to steal the babies, so the big T-Rex breaks the glass. Because that's something that moms do to protect their babies. The reason she fights isn't because she is mean, but to protect herself and her children.

I also love the brontosaurus! The brontosaurus has a longer and bigger neck than the giraffe. They are big like a school bus. The giraffe eats up in the tree, but the brontosaurus eats up higher than the tree. I think the brontosaurus is friendly because he doesn't hurt people (but the T-rex does). Hmmm...you know I like dinosaurs.

The velociraptor is not friendly with people. They are brown. Little arms with two fingers. Tall legs. Big feet. Sometimes they run very fast. They use their arms to climb things like power lines and phone cords. They are kind of mean to all

dinosaurs, like Godzilla. Some of them have friends, but not many. Just like other dinosaurs, velociraptors like eating meat. They can eat a whole goat! You have to have sharp teeth to eat a goat. Cars make velociraptors mad, especially cop cars. Velociraptors chase cop cars and buses when they're angry.

Not all monsters are make-believe or in the past. Some are here with us. I watch the animals on Channel 77 America and on DVDs at my mother's house. Whenever I think of monsters, I think of my mother. Guess what?! I know all seven oceans. I like tall water. I like watching water animals on TV, especially sea monsters. Sea monsters live in big, giant water, and they like to swim in it. You see through the water, because it is clear, dark blue. Sea monsters are the strongest animal in the world. They can almost eat through a boat. They have strong and sharp teeth, which is different from our teeth. Yep. Sea monsters use their big mouths, like a crocodile's, to eat fish and birds. Sea monsters are brown with scales. They use their tail to wave through the water. Sea monsters are stronger than Godzilla because they have stronger teeth. Sea monsters are stronger than King Kong. They are stronger than the dinosaurs. Sea monsters all swim fast, and they can jump out of the water super fast. Sea monsters are blind, but they can smell fish and birds.

They jump up and eat birds, and even other dinosaurs. Yup. They can also smell blood in the water. It's not scary for me. The shark is a strong fish. I've watched sharks in my mom's home. Sea monsters are even stronger than a shark. Sea monsters are stronger than elephants too. Elephants are almost monsters.

The uncle of the elephants are the woolly mammoths. No, I'm not scared of woolly mammoths. I saw a woolly mammoth in the museum. Woolly mammoths are the same size as elephants. Woolly mammoths are brown. Tusks are long teeth. They use the tusks to push the trees down so they can eat the leaves from the trees. They don't eat meat. Different from dinosaurs. The woolly mammoth is nicer than the elephant. The woolly mammoths were friends with people sometimes. They lived in the snow, like in the North Pole, with polar bears and stuff. They had fur to keep them warm.

I like animals because they make me happy. I really like animals when they are big and strong. Sometimes I wish I was an animal. Almost. I wish I was big and strong like an animal, like a monster. Like a whale. Then I could protect the United States of America. From monsters. Or the President. I could be tall, but never taller than Jesus. But I'm just a human.





# The Magical Gift of Friendship

By Latrice Person

In collaboration with Morgan Farrow



*This is dedicated to the best writer in the whole entire program, the best illustrator that you could imagine, and the best friend. Her birthday was April 23rd. She will always be in all of our hearts forever and ever. For those of you who don't know her, her name was Victoria Bement Schramm. She was my best friend. She was all of our best friends. As long as we have this project, her story can be told through me and through all of us that write.*

Once upon a time there were two friends. One was a Gargoyle named Daisy and one was a Witch named Sunshine. They met in a unique magical school that taught them numbers and letters. They had special classes together like art and music. They flew around with magical scooters because they couldn't walk. They are very opposite because one likes to cast magical spells and turn the kingdom into a place. The other is more realistic and likes quiet things and helping around the kingdom, but they are

very similar too. Sometimes the Gargoyle, Daisy, gets a little upset, but the Witch, Sunshine, and her assistants help her calm down. But the nice thing is how the witch's imagination intrigues the Gargoyle. Instead of always thinking bad things, the Gargoyle now tries to look at the brighter picture.

Daisy, the Gargoyle princess, lives in a blue and green castle and loves to help people. She is green with blue hair, orange eyes, pink shoes, and an orange dress. Her cape is purple, red, and pink. Her favorite

color is red. She has a pink bed and an orange chair. She drives an orange magical scooter that flies. She loves listening to gargoyle country, rock, and pop music with her housemate, Midnight, the Peacock. They both like art and going to the movies. They both have jobs and like to make money. Midnight the Peacock can walk. She is quiet, independent, and is very artistic. She likes art and making bracelets. They both like to help around the castle.

Daisy the Gargoyle likes helping people and working for the kingdom too. The Gargoyle has ups and downs, but she knows that things can change, and life is not a box of chocolate pretzels but you can always have a new perspective in life. She doesn't like when people disagree with each other, but she learns from one of her wise advisors that you can't change people; you can only change yourself. This advisor is a wise owl named Autumn who is always nice and stern, but she tells it like it is.

The Owl, Autumn, has been working with different characters with special needs for many years. Autumn is very funny, strong willed, and calm. She is green and black. She has a family with two boy owls and knows how to be very patient. Autumn the Owl says that you can always choose your friends. She says you can't change your past, but you can change your future for the better. You can't change your family, but you can choose who to be around. She also says that sometimes you just have to let things go. She says that there's always a rainbow after it rains. You can't always be friends with everybody, but you've got to believe in yourself that you're a good person. She always says to worry about yourself, and not others. She says to stay calm. She says to listen to yourself.

The Owl's friend is an Elephant named Raven. She's laid back, bubbly, and helpful and works with everyone in the Kingdom. She likes reading and she's very

funny. She is quiet but she has a big personality. She tells Daisy and Sunshine not to take everything so seriously, as she tries to bring a sense of humor into their lives. The Elephant helps them to live their lives independently by helping in their homes and taking them out on adventures. Whenever Daisy gets off track, the Elephant is there to bring her back to reality and tell her not to dwell on things. Since the Elephant is young, Daisy can relate to her. They like the same music and they like to dance and go shopping in the kingdom. She teaches Daisy lessons about how to talk to people and how to stay kind. Raven the Elephant is fun and Autumn the Owl is more of a mentor. The Owl makes sure Daisy is responsible and achieving her goals.

There's also a magical pink bunny rabbit named Miracle who helps everyone. She is a role model, and Daisy really looks up to her. She is kind, sweet, driven, and motivated. The Bunny Rabbit says to never say you can't. She tries to bring up everyone's spirits with a smile on her face. The Bunny Rabbit has a new job helping other people achieve their life goals but she comes to see Daisy at her castle. The Bunny Rabbit is goofy and loves carrots and celery and chocolate. She has a bunny brother who likes horses and a bunny daughter who likes swimming. She tells the Gargoyle that you don't have to be a product of your environment; what matters is how you change your life. The Elephant, Owl, and Bunny Rabbit all work together at the Lifehouse Agency where they all help to take care of the magical creatures with special needs.

There is also a turquoise Dove named Spirit who looks upon the magical kingdom. She is funny and brings everyone joy. She always encourages the characters to write about how they feel. She brings light to the whole entire kingdom. Spirit taught the Gargoyle and the Witch how to read and

write. She taught them how to express themselves through words. She started a magical book program called The Imagination Project which helps all the characters with special abilities to express themselves through writing and telling stories. She taught Daisy how to be open and honest and to be comfortable expressing herself. She has the biggest personality, is always happy, and cares about all of the individuals in the kingdom. She always wants everyone to achieve their goals. Without her, the Kingdom wouldn't exist, the project wouldn't exist, and Daisy wouldn't be as confident as she is today. Daisy the Gargoyle wouldn't have written the stories that she did. Daisy really looks up to Spirit the Dove. She loves the way the Dove comes up with words. She is like the older version of the Witch because they have bright bubbly imaginations and kind hearts.

Daisy's friend is a Witch named Sunshine and together they fly around to help the people in the kingdom. They know they can't bring peace to all, but they always try their best to be bright sunny people and bring light to the kingdom. They use their scooters because they can't walk. Sunshine has a pink and purple pixie haircut, blue eyes, pink shoes, and a purple sparkly dress. She has magical powers and can turn herself into a bat. She is always brave and carries around a pink unicorn that shoots fire. She has a big imagination and uses a magical wand to turn things into rainbows and butterflies. Together they love to have fun, live life to the fullest, and help people. Sunshine has changed Daisy's way of thinking with her bright personality and kind heart.

Daisy really loves Sunshine. They are very best friends and they're like sisters. Sometimes Daisy gets nervous around other people, so she carries around a stuffed dog to help. When she gets nervous, she starts

laughing. Most of Daisy's friends laugh at her, but Sunshine never does because she knows that Daisy is a good person inside. Sunshine always helps Daisy not to be nervous and tells her to be brave and confident. Daisy has trouble expressing her emotions, but she has writing, Sunshine, and her mentors to help her through it. Sunshine also tells Daisy not to let the townspeople get to her. Sunshine thinks that friends are important and always wants to be happy and to take care of the people around her. She knows that every day is not the best but she tries to find the best in every day. Sometimes Daisy gets upset and cries, but for the most part she can think of different things to make her happy again. Because of Sunshine's spirit, Daisy feels better about herself and becomes confident. She knows to always be thankful for her friends.

Sunshine and her mommy named Sunset go on adventures together to other towns in the kingdom. The mother and daughter witch live together. They love to go exploring and shopping. They go to the beach and to fly around different kingdoms on their brooms. They like to visit other family members. The Witch also has a husband and they were married in a faraway, magical kingdom with animals and rides.

Daisy the Gargoyle has a disability and lives in a special house. Her mom and dad can sometimes be friendly, but sometimes they are not, and this is why she moves out on her own. She leaves her past behind and starts a new chapter for her life. She has a sister and two nieces and two nephews. Her family members all live in a nice cave. Some of the people in the town are her friends, so they help take care of her. Sometimes she goes to the cave to see her family.

There's also a Fairy named Skylette who helps Daisy and Sunshine if they need it. She is their little sidekick. She used to live with the Gargoyle, but now the Peacock

lives there. Skylette has orange and purple wings with a rainbow dress. Her eyes are purple and her hair is orange. She loves to watch plays and cartoons. She is laid back and helpful, but she can be snappy, too. Other times she's very happy. She can always make people laugh.

The fairy has a twin sister named Moon. They love to be together and sometimes they argue but they are pretty much inseparable. They love to shop, watch movies, take pictures, and go bowling in the sky. They are total opposites, because one is very laid back, and the other is very bubbly and happy, but they both feed off of each other. They are tighter than a rubber band that doesn't snap. They live with their mom in a red fairy kingdom of clouds. They really like to live life and have fun.

There's a tricky Warlock named Baltimore who is a king. He says he likes everyone, but he actually tries to destroy the kingdom. He is sneaky and turns into a pitbull that likes to scare all of the nice people in the kingdom. He tries to lock everyone up in the dungeon. The thing about the Warlock is that he was not always like this. He used to be friendly, but life happened and now he is mean.

Baltimore the Warlock is a shape changer and changes into a clown, a guy, a pitbull, and a lot of other things. He doesn't like that the witch and gargoyle want the kingdom to grow and he wants it to be destroyed. He is afraid of everyone being happy because he is insecure so he tries to put a spell on the kingdom to make people mad at each other. At first, it works, because they drink a magic potion that they think is water which makes them fight with each other. Then the Witch and Gargoyle come with their scooters, and the Witch casts a reverse spell with the Gargoyle's help to take the curse away.

Then the Warlock turns into a dragon, and tries to blow the kingdom away,

but Daisy the Gargoyle fights him with the strength of her wings. Sunshine the Witch uses the magic wand to fight him, and they both fly on their scooters. Then Baltimore the Warlock throws Sunshine and Daisy in the dungeon. Skylette the Fairy goes to save them. They all try to fight the Warlock. Daisy wants to calm the warlock down, not destroy him. After she calms him down, he becomes happy again and wants to join the kingdom. The Wise Owl is proud of everyone for doing a good job. The Wise Owl was proud of Daisy the Gargoyle for trying to be understanding and not mean to the Warlock like other people in the kingdom.

Baltimore the Warlock was very mean, but Daisy knew to be nice to him. Eventually Baltimore had a change of heart and became nice too. Daisy knows that just because someone is mean to you doesn't mean that you have to be mean to them. She learns that from her advisors. The Warlock has a family of his own, which shows that you can change the way you think and act no matter what.

After a year passed, the Gargoyle and the Witch moved away. The Gargoyle knew it was best to move away because she had difficulties with her Gargoyle family. It made her feel scared and brave and nervous at the same time, but she knew that she was an adult and needed to be in a safer environment. She was very scared that her Gargoyle dad would be frustrated with her, but knew that it was the right thing to do for her safety. Daisy loved her family and her mom always made her laugh a lot. She knew she needed to leave the situation, but she would miss being around her nieces and hearing "Auntie Daisy!" She would miss teasing her nieces and nephews all the time. She would miss cookouts, mac and cheese, and birthday parties. She would miss listening to music with her family and having get togethers. She would miss being

in their presence, miss being a unit. She was scared of where she would live and who she would live with, but she knew that the new townspeople would help her be independent and successful in her life. She knows to always find the positive in the negative. The Gargoyle was also excited because she could live by herself and have her own room. The Gargoyle now can go to a mall in the clouds, a dragon theme park, get magical ice cream, go to a movie under the stars, and write fictional stories about magical kingdoms. The Gargoyle writes stories with her friend about castles, dragons, witches, and magic. The Wise Owl helps the Gargoyle to be independent and she also helps the other people in the kingdom with special needs.

Then the Witch and her mom move to another kingdom in the sky to live with her grandmother. The Witch is very sad to leave her friend the Gargoyle, but she knows that they'll be friends forever. Sunshine the Witch knows that even though she is sad, it will be good for both of them in the long run. The Witch and the Gargoyle fly back and forth to see each other and stay with each other. They always try to be together.

One day the Witch gets sick and the magical wizard doctor gives her an orange potion to feel better. The Witch's mom takes her to the doctor, who says that the Witch has green spot disease. Then the Gargoyle gets worried and frustrated for the Witch. The Wizard doctor's medicine makes the Witch feel a little better, but not all the way better. The Gargoyle feels glad that her friend feels better, but she is still scared for her friend because they are like sisters. One magical night they both fall asleep and when the Gargoyle wakes up, the Witch doesn't wake up. The Gargoyle doesn't believe it at first, and tries to shake her friend but she realizes that the Witch is in a new dimension without her. When the Gargoyle realizes that her friend passed away, she laughed at first because she was nervous, but then she thought about how much she would miss her friend, and she cried too.

After a couple of months pass, the Gargoyle thinks about her friend and about how brave and happy she is. It makes her feel braver and ready to do things for herself. Thinking about her friend makes her feel ready to conquer anything.

The end.

*Latrice on "Spirit" the Dove: "I look up to everyone in the story, but I look up to Professor Scott the most. If it weren't for her, this program wouldn't exist and the University of Rochester too because it all helped to make this dream come alive."*



## *The Inspiration Project:*

*Project Director*  
Joanna Scott

*Project Coordinator*  
Abby Brengle

*Assistant Program Director*  
Justina McCarty

*Assistant Coordinator*  
Nick Knopf

*Project Advisors*  
Deborah Rossen-Knill  
Glenn Cerosaletti

*Consumer Advocates*  
Kristi Powers  
Tina Bennett

*Undergraduate Coordinators*  
Leena Khoury  
Maggie Perry

*Consumer Guides*  
Latrice Person  
Toni Montgomery

*Anthology Design*  
Abby Brengle

*Consumers*  
Thelma Barnes  
Geraldine Copeland  
Charlene Furhy  
Russell Hill  
Pat Hurley  
Toni Montgomery  
Latrice Person  
Chris Thorton  
Jeff Yarmel

*Mentor*  
Ann Kurz

*Students*  
Shyam Bhagat  
Pamela Chan  
Ally Dimauro  
Morgan Farrow  
Lilia Frank  
Lucinda Hinojosa  
Leena Khoury  
Amina N’Gambwa  
Maggie Perry  
Becca Reef  
Nawshin Sharif

