



## Testimonials from Parents and Students of Global Works Travel Writing 101

The Circle of Writers workshop was very helpful for my daughter. Anna went from “I want to express myself on paper but I don’t know how” to writing quickly and freely. She really learned and internalized techniques to help her put her feelings and observations on paper. The instructor’s comments on a first draft always led Anna to realize she could say more without repeating herself.

Since the workshop, Anna has taken Composition I at the local community college, as a high-schooler. I was pleased at how easy it was for her to complete her assignments– no writer’s block! Her teacher’s comments were positive, and she received an A. I believe her success and ease with that college class are attributable to Mary’s influence and the Circle of Writers experience.

Before the workshop, I had two concerns:

- The usual one of letting a stranger into my child’s life through the computer. Very soon I saw that Mary was credible and professional. Her comments from the get-go were aimed at helping Anna write as herself.
- Would the topics suggested show that the teacher had an agenda? Again, I was reassured immediately. Mary suggested topics that are universal and of interest to young people without leading them in any political/social direction.

I highly recommend it.

**-Betsy Acciani**

My daughter Maggie participated in Circle of Writers after returning from a Global Works trip to Nicaragua. She had so many stories and so much enthusiasm about her trip and wanted an outlet to share her adventure. Circle of Writers gave her the tools to channel that energy. She wrote so vividly about her trip; we felt like we were there! I believe it strengthened her writing skills and helped her find her voice.

**-Terry Moran, parent of Global Worker**

After returning home from my Global Works trip, I had millions of thoughts and ideas jumbled in my head. Everyday of the trip was a life-changing experience in a culture so different from my own. It was overwhelming to sort through all of my thoughts. Writing has always been an outlet for me, and the travel-writing workshop through Circle Of Writers gave me direction. Circle of Writers provided assignments and prompts which enabled me to organize my thoughts, reflect on my experiences and learn even more from my trip. I was encouraged to write every day and to use the details from my trip journal in my writing, which showed me that I had a lot to say! I enjoyed the collaboration from the instructor and other students- it was interesting to get their feedback and hear about what they learned from their Global Works trips! Circle of Writers also taught me that the details and anecdotes from my experience are much stronger than overgeneralizations. My work from the workshop was stronger and used more imagery than any piece I had done in school. I was able to use these lessons in writing essays for my college applications and was more confident and proud of my finished piece. The Circle of Writers workshop enriched my Global Works experience and fueled my passions to continue traveling and writing.

**-Maggie Moran, Global Works 2011**

The Travel Writing workshop deepened my Global Works experience by giving me a structured yet fun and laid-back strategy for understand all the things I had seen and done during my Global Works trip to Nicaragua. This workshop, at its most basic level, is a forum for teenagers of all backgrounds to express their feelings without the fear of being judged. In my experience, I was writing about heavy issues such as poverty and emotional depression in times of difficulty. So, it was important that I could feel safe expressing my true opinions while getting positive feedback on my work. As well as positive reinforcement and feedback, this workshop taught me techniques for analyzing my own writing and the writings of others and being able to enjoy and engage in even the most overtly boring pieces of writing. Therefore, when I was assigned the 614 page Iliad over the summer I was able to develop a genuine interest in the text and its fundamental ideas using the techniques I had learned during the workshop.

**-Jake Kent, Global Works 2011**

I had the opportunity to work with Mary and a small group of my peers on my travel diaries. On one occasion, I remember her saying, "write how you speak." This was so simple, but it made a huge difference, and my writing started to sound more genuine and sincere. As an aspiring writer, I benefited greatly from the many bits of advice Mary provided.



She understands that any personal publication, whether a memoir or editorial, has to be true to the author, and she helped pass that understanding on to me.

I think the most intriguing part of Mary's workshops is that it isn't in a classroom. I mean this both literally and figuratively: literally in that it is online and easily accessible, figuratively in that it is a collaboration, not a seminar. Participants won't "sit down" and be lectured by Mary. They will have the opportunity to work with her as well as the other participants.

In addition to being a master of the literary craft, Mary is so easy to work with. Never did I feel pressured or intimidated. She is extremely approachable and open-minded. Writing is an art – it is unique to every creator and there is no set formula for what makes an excellent piece. Mary has an innate ability to recognize peoples' styles. Rather than shape her students' styles to reflect her own, she takes an independent approach to every individual, helping their styles reach full potential.

**-Austin Reagan, Global Works 2010**