



Lynne Goldner teaches a One Earth Writing workshop in Saginaw at the Samaritas Community Center.

Power Of The Pen

New nonprofit hopes to bring teens together through writing.

Stacy Gittleman | Contributing Writer

One Earth Writing, a new nonprofit organization founded by local writer and publicist Lynne Meredith Goldner of Huntington Woods, seeks to challenge youth to find bonds through the power of the pen and become ambassadors for peace.

Golodner, a mother of four who strives to instill acceptance and learning about others in her own family, said there is a rising demand locally for her newly formed writing workshops, which strive to "build a foundation of peace, understanding and collaboration rather than a world fractured by hatred, fear and misinformation.

"Every person has a beloved grandparent and every home is built on love," Golodner said. "I have always written about and been fascinated by the ways in which we share common ground. I've been wanting to do something that expands that notion beyond just writing compelling stories. Through One Earth Writing, I hope to transform the generation coming up with ideas of similarity and collaboration and stamp out bigotry one person at a time."

The fledgling organization is on its way to qualifying for 501(c)(3) status and anticipates receiving official recognition later this year. It is backed by a board of directors with expertise in writing, social work, law and education such as Detroit poet laureate and performer M.L. Liebler; Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and *Detroit Today* radio host Stephen Henderson; writer and writing instructor Maureen Dunphy; attorney, legal blogger and entrepreneur Alisa Peskin-Shepherd; American Federation of Teachers archivist and oral historian Dan Golodner (her husband); and Downtown Publications editor Lisa Brody.

Brody said she is enthused to serve as a "sounding board" for the organization's efforts. A veteran of covering politics and political campaigns, she said launching such an organization in times where words seem to be so cutting and divisive can give teens a vehicle to flourish and find their power through the use of writ-

ten expression and not "fists or violence."

"Whether you are a teen or an adult, I think we have learned through this political cycle just how important words are," Brody said. "I am excited to help Lynne in her efforts to reach out to less advantaged students to explore their writing and how important it is to choose words that are not bullying or threatening but meaningful and foster a society that is less hurtful."

Looking at the current events in the world, Golodner and Brody agree there is no better time for teens and adults to grasp the power of writing to work through and understand differences with the goal of finding common bonds with people of diverse backgrounds.

"We have already been through the Civil Rights Movement, and I thought that by now, for this current generation of youth, they would be living in an era of equality and not one of such polarity," Golodner said. "But I have hope because when my kids see others from different races, religions and ethnicities, they just see them as people."

Golodner kicked off her mission with an Aug. 11 writing workshop with underprivileged teens and tweens through the Samaritas Community Center in Saginaw. She is now calling on leadership-minded teens and tweens in the Detroit Metro area interested in expressing their identity through writing to apply to become "One Earth Ambassadors." There is no cost to participate.

Applicants must write a one-page letter explaining why they're interested in participating and submit a sample of their best writing to wonearthwriting.org/ambassadors/apply. Submissions are accepted until Oct. 10. Ten ambassadors will be selected and notified by Oct. 20 to attend monthly workshops between November and May. Ultimately, One Earth Writing will publish a book based on the writings of workshop ambassadors and participants.

For more information, visit www.oneearthwriting.org or call (248) 376-0406. *