

Sharon Daly

Advanced Learning Coordinator, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher, New Teacher Mentor

I have been a member of the Greater Madison Writing Project since 2014 when I took part in a month-long Summer Institute. I recognized immediately that the experience I had over the course of those four weeks was transformative, but I had no idea that it would provide me with a cadre of passionate educators who would become like family and involve me in ongoing professional development that is truly the best I have experienced in my long career as an educator. I have taken part in several year-long teacher research institutes, Saturday Seminars, and attended local and regional conferences sponsored by GMWP and other regional and state writing groups. I have also received training in Community, Career and College Writing (C3WP) and have found the units useful and engaging for the diverse grade level groups that I teach.

The project that I completed for the Summer Institute was called Standards of Joy. It was honestly a topic that got me into a state of flow and made the work....well *joyful* is the only way to describe it. An unexpected outcome of the project was being able to share it through presentations at regional and state conferences and seminars. Over the course of the past year, as the pandemic lingered on and created disruption on so many levels, I was able to hold fast to maintaining joyful standards. The project would have never happened without the nurturing catalyst of the GMWP.

Another outcome of the Summer Institute was recognizing that we are all writers- and that included myself. I unburied a long lost desire to write poetry and that has led me to new adventures as well. I began writing poems and have sent some out into the world, initially with much trepidation. I have found another community of regional poets that I would never have known about if the GMWP hadn't given me the spark that I needed to begin writing. I have also been captivated by how poetry can be used across subject areas and engages students at all grade levels. That has been joyful for sure!

I look forward to more joyful adventures, learning in community, and everything that the Greater Madison Writing Project provides. My career in teaching always feels new and fresh when I stay connected to this amazing group of educators.