

Upcoming OLLI Brown-Bag Lunch Presentations



Homeless, Not Hopeless

“I could go to school and learn what you know, but you could never learn what I know in school.” One of my students said this to me one morning in English class. And it was the truth. My students knew a lot and the only way was to learn what they knew was to listen. I listened hard for eight years as I ran an educational program for homeless men and women in Boston’s South End. My students were some of the city’s most undereducated and abused people. Through the years they had been called unteachable, unsalvageable, the non-producers and they had come to believe the labels, yet they still had ferocious hunger to learn.

My stories show how these people returned to school-re-imagined the reinvented themselves in their classroom. They became readers and writers and published a literary magazine. They learned to act and formed a theater troupe with art and created a gallery of junk sculptures. One became a philanthropist and one fell in love with math. One learned who she was through writing and another saved someone’s life with a single eighteen-line poem. They all came to class seeking a GED, and though most didn’t get it, they proved they were brilliant-in the literal sense of the work. They sparkled. And their classroom, lit up with love and kindness, was one of the very best places on earth.

Come meet these students in their classroom. See their faces (slide Show), hear their voices (part of a book reading) and perhaps think of our homeless folks with new understanding.

Presenter: *Sharon Carey*

Sharon F. Carey is an OLLI member and facilitator (Theater Classes on Miller, Williams, and O’Neill). Before working with the homeless, she taught for twenty-one years at Miss Porter’s School in Farmington, Connecticut, and did educational consulting for Michele P. Gorman Associated. She now works with a theater group at HEATH (formerly the Committee to End Elder Homelessness) in Boston and is working hard to publish her book about teaching the homeless entitled *Catching Lighting*.

Date & Time: Monday, April 23, 11:30-1:00 pm.

Location: Room 204A, 3rd fl., McCormack Hall, UMass Boston Campus