

Writing Out Loud: What a Blind Teacher Learned from Leading a Memoir Class for Seniors

Author bio and book description (486 words)

Beth Finke is an award-winning author, teacher, journalist, and a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant. She also happens to be blind.

Author of *Long Time, No See* (University of Illinois Press, 2003) and *Hanni and Beth: Safe and Sound* (Blue Marlin Publications, 2007), Beth has now published her third book.



[Writing Out Loud: What a Blind Teacher Learned from Leading a Memoir Class for Seniors](#) chronicles the challenges and rewards of Beth's decade-long adventure in helping older adults write their stories. Their poignant memories intertwine with her own, and the experience is rich with life lessons for both students and teacher.

Beth's second book, *Hanni & Beth: Safe and Sound*, is a children's book. Ever since it was published in 2007, she has been visiting schools to talk with kids about disability, trust, adapting to change, bonding with animals, service dogs, teamwork, diversity and dealing with bullying.

Beth is a featured commentator on NPR. Her articles have been published by National Geographic School Publishing, the *Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine*, *Woman's Day Magazine*, *The Writer*, *Business Law Today*, *University of Chicago Magazine*, the *New York Post*, *Dog Fancy* and *The Bark*.

Whitney, her Seeing Eye dog, leads Beth through airports and hotels to conferences and other appearances all over North America. She has spoken at an American Library Association annual conference in Anaheim; an Easterseals national convention in Washington, D.C.; a PAWS International conference in Vancouver; the Pacific Northwest Writers Association conference in Seattle; the Words & Music Festival in New Orleans; the Arkansas Literary Festival in Little Rock; the Vision Forward Conference in Milwaukee; the Women's Best Weekend in Orange Beach, Alabama; and Diabetes Partners in Action Coalition in Lansing, Michigan.

You can also find Beth speaking to corporate audiences on disability and workplace accessibility, and more generally on overcoming life's adversities. She has presented at company retreats at PepsiCo, United Stationers, and West Monroe Partners. Academic audiences include classes at the University of Chicago Medical School, Carnegie Mellon



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University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of New Hampshire, Loyola University, DePaul University and the University of Colorado.

Every year Beth leads writing workshops at Northwestern University Summer Writers' Conference, appears regularly at the Printers Row Lit Fest, and was on the Oprah Show in a short segment about the job she had modeling nude for university art students before her writing career took off.

Beth is the recipient of a writing fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and the ASPCA's Henry Bergh award for children's literature.

And last, but not least, the Lisagor Award she won for a radio piece about the Chicago White Sox makes her the only blind woman in America to be honored for sports broadcasting.

Beth is married to Mike Knezovich. They have one grown son, Gus, and live in the Printers Row neighborhood of Chicago with Beth's Seeing Eye dog, Whitney.



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