

The 2019 Halfwood Press Writing Contest Recipient

Delores Carlos entered the 2019 Halfwood Press Writing Contest and won!

After she bought the Galleon Halfwood Press, Gretchen changed her mind and chose instead to devote her time to curating her collection of fabrics - one of her many interests. Gretchen asked me to find a good home for her press. The 2019 Halfwood Press writing contest was the idea of a friend and advisor, Alok Mandloi, who stops in our Mini Art Gallery on his way home from work. He tries his hand at intaglio plate-making. When I told him about Gretchen's gift his advice was, "Have a writing contest!" His suggestion solved a problem for me - how to choose a home which Gretchen would be pleased to hear and, in this 'Zine, to read about. I believe our choice of a recipient for Gretchen's press will please her. As for my friend Alok, he continues with his interest in printmaking. His schooling (in India) included arts and crafts, so he's no stranger to the enjoyment of doing things with his hands besides his daily job of coding. He's a software engineer.

This project has taught me a lot. When I decided to extend the contest by making this 'Zine for everyone concerned, assembling it took me back to my high school days when I was the editor of the annuals. I hope everyone who reads the 'Zine enjoys the essays, poems and lyrics that people sent in to share their hopes for using the press. I have chosen to list the entries alphabetically - including the press' recipient essay - in alphabetic order. I chose to use the word, *recipient*, instead of *winner* because everyone who entered is a winner in my mind. Thank you, all. - BR

Dolores Carlos' writes:



Saturday, April 19, 2019: I just received your letter and am so incredibly happy. I sometimes am so swamped with student work that I forget to check my personal email. I am so grateful you wrote a letter, thank you for that extra effort. I am also incredibly grateful for Gretchen's continued generosity. I can't begin how much our students at East Los Angeles College mean to me. Very few students that I teach are art majors and have never been introduced to the arts beyond the little that they receive in inner city high schools. I am crying as I write to you because I am thinking in the back of my mind the many projects that we will be able to offer through your and Gretchen's gift. Thank you, thank you, thank you. - Dolores

Delores' winning essay and her biography

If I win the press By Dolores Carlos

In 1993 I took a woodcut workshop at Self-Help Graphics in East Los Angeles, and a six-week venture to dabble in something new became a life-changing passion. Whether working collectively or individually, it was always a learning experience that helped reinforce and develop my own artistic expression and identity as a Chicana artist.

I immediately fell in love with this creative, challenging, meditative, and exciting process. Consequently, in the mid-1990s as a volunteer at LAMP, an organization that works with chronically homeless people, I started to teach print-making, and later at Maternal and Child Health Access where I worked, I organized and managed an arts and crafts collective for low-income women who lived in the communities adjacent to downtown Los Angeles and taught them print-making as well.

Through these experiences, it became clear that the creative process and artistic expression involved in print-making is a transformative experience. Currently I teach English at East Los Angeles College (ELAC) alongside colleagues who are profoundly committed to our students.

Carlos Centeno, Obed Silva, Raeanna Gleason, and I understand that our students who face many challenges can benefit from the experience of making art on many levels: academically, personally, and collectively. If I win the press, we will further our effort to bring art into students' lives by creating an on-going print-making/writing workshop to introduce students from different majors to new forms of artistic expression as a source for growth and self-empowerment. This in turn will help to grow the seed of social justice and passion for education that we strive to plant in our students.

I am incredibly fortunate to have colleagues who like myself understand the privilege and honor of being educators, not only in the classroom, but through meaningful extracurricular work. Many of our students have lived in poverty and must work to help support their families who barely get by; on top of that, many have experienced serious trauma. Yet they dream of a better future and work very hard to transfer to universities because they know that higher education will help them realize their dreams. Even more amazing is that their dreams include the betterment not only of their own lives, but the lives of their families and their communities.

A few days ago when talking with Carlos, a most dedicated professor, I found myself trying to articulate a thought: our campus is a magical place because the ongoing current of student success and the collective imprint they leave on it, each other and on us is often palpable.

Last week during their spring break about twenty students who participated in two of our transfer programs returned to ELAC, their home-base, from Santa Barbara, Berkeley, Santa Cruz, Fullerton, and other universities. They arrived in a flurry of excitement to visit the professors who they swear helped them stay on track through more than their English classes. Their fresh faces, enthusiasm, motivation, and growth are indeed magic that is contagious.

These are some of the reasons why Carlos, Obed, Raeanna, and I want to further support our students through the experience of making and showing their art as it will help them to convey their stories, become a tangible piece of their legacy, inform others of the possibilities available to them, and give voice to their community.

We are not therapists, yet we know that through writing and art students can begin to process and heal some of the trauma that are often barriers to their success. Some of our students have experienced homelessness, abuse, mental illness, life-long poverty, gang violence and more.

When students come to trust us, they write about their experience in their essays, or they come to our offices to talk, and we do our best to offer resources. As part of programs that focus on transfer and social justice, they are able to create and share a sense of family. This is all of great benefit, but often not enough.

In an effort to further grow an environment that fosters academic and life support, Carlos, Obed and I have offered workshops that we organize and fund. In a Cartonera workshop we recycled and repurposed discarded cardboard to make journals. The covers, made of cardboard, became mixed media art that expressed who we dream of becoming.

One student brought her young daughter, her mother and her grandmother. Four generations of girls and women making art and talking about

dreams for themselves and each other—it was powerful to say the least. In a print-making workshop that I taught, students from a social justice transfer program made prints about social issues that they not only dream of impacting, but actually work to change. Often they (our students) make us cry, but just as often they make us laugh; and frequently, they teach us and each other. Such is the power of art.

After the media reports about parents who purchased their children's entrance into top universities, an LA Times reporter came to ELAC and interviewed students who are part of Puente, a transfer program that Carlos directs. They were fundraising for their annual university trip that starts at UC Santa Cruz and ends at Berkeley.

They know how hard they must work to make their dreams a reality, and they are willing to do so. In further recognition and support of their hard work, I want to create and grow an ongoing print-making workshop that will include writing.

Using spoons to transfer ink onto paper is something that students have loved doing but having a press will lead to greater quality of work produced and provide another source for learning new skills. The press will undoubtedly inspire curiosity and excitement, and lead to a greater impetus for exploring different forms of expression, art, and ultimately transformation.

On a personal level, my hope is to build from my six-week venture in 1993 an experience that will give students, my colleagues who will work with me, and myself a long-lasting awareness of the possibility that comes with art.

- Dolores Carlos

Dolores Carlos was born in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua (long before it became a killing ground for women) but has lived mostly in East Los Angeles since 1964. Since age 23, Dolores has worked with homeless mentally ill men and women, homeless families, women and children victims of domestic violence, immigrant women and their families, and other marginalized communities.

Currently, Dolores is an Associate Professor of English at East Los Angeles College, and lives in Rosemead (a hop and a skip from East Los Angeles) with her husband Suleyman.

Dolores's art reflects her interest in celebrating women and children, the human spirit, and the wonderful diversity that is Los Angeles. Ms. Carlos was nominated for inclusion in the freeservers.com website in the area of Advancement in the Arts for her unique role in the preserving and encouraging women's native cultural arts from their countries of origin, mainly Central American counties and Mexico.

Dolores Carlos has worked for decades as an advocate for health care, mental health care, emergency services, housing and tenants' rights, and education for low-income communities. Her current work is primarily for the Latino community. She also counseled women, and children, victims of domestic violence, chronically mentally ill homeless men and women and new immigrants, especially women.

She has worked for 10 years for Maternal and Child Health Access as a Case Manager and Health Educator, in addition to her role as Arts Collective Coordinator. Prior to her work at East Los Angeles College, she worked in Human Services, and Los Angeles Men's Place on Skid Row, and as a community organizer for the Interfaith Hunger Coalition where she helped to bring the first Certified Farmer's Markets to Los Angeles.

She also lived and worked in Tijuana, Mexico for two years as part of Los Ninos, an organization that built homes and schools in communities surrounding the city's garbage dump, and, as a two-year member of the Los Angeles Catholic Worker Community, lived and worked in the skid are of downtown Los Angeles providing a variety of social services to homeless men, women, and immigrant families from Mexico and Central America.

Dolores Carlos
1426 Mountain Vist Dr.
Rosemead CA 91770
dolorescarlos@msn.com

<http://www.dolorescarlos.freeservers.com>