

# Life Enhancements Embrace All Aspects of Life

## “Cowtipping” Provides Creative Outlet for Expression

“Cowtipping” is not what you’re thinking. It is an organization that offers a fresh, creative opportunity for MORA clients to express themselves in writing. And during this past summer, five adult clients were able to learn more about writing, share their work with their peers, and then become published authors.

Bryan Brice, founder of the organization, has a younger brother with developmental disabilities. He longed for others to discover the richer dimensions of those with disabilities. “It’s about giving all of us a new way to think about disability, its assets and its dynamism,” he says.

In this process, clients go with their assigned staff person to a class for six weeks. A teacher talks to them about writing, specifically poetry, non-fiction, fiction, and journalism; they look at strong examples of those genres in class; then they receive a specific assignment. “For example, this writer uses dialogue well, so let’s try writing dialogue,” Bryan says. Clients in the class either write themselves or their staff partners act as scribes, taking down their words (but not adding any of their own). Then the clients share their writing with the rest of the class. “It was amazing,” said Stephanie Kohl, who coordinated this activity, “that ability to express themselves and let others know who they are.”

“It gives them a space to try an art form that previously had been thought as being irrelevant to them,” Bryan says. “We honor, respect, and tease out their abilities. It’s an opportunity for self-expression, exploring a new artistic medium, as well as self-advocacy. And it’s fun!”

Bryan says, “This is not about improving grammar or writing style. It’s not about changing or fixing how people tell stories. It’s about giving them a voice. So often this group has been spoken for, rather than speaking for themselves.”

The MORA Cowtipping group found this process to be personally rewarding. They each wrote at least three or four assignments each night. “In a way, it’s magical what happened,” Stephanie Kohl points out.

At the end of the process, a party celebrated their work at which a published book of their writing was distributed.

Jill Weldin, mother of Daniel, one of the authors, talks about the experience. “I’m so pleased that Mount Olivet staff saw Daniel’s potential and involved him in this class. Jesse, the staff person who accompanied him, said Daniel didn’t say much at first, but gradually he began. They were really able to bring out Daniel’s personality, and I am so grateful for that. And a poetry reading at the end! What a typical

thing to do. It was so well thought out. These writers were so well respected. It was wonderful seeing Daniel’s potential—something that does not happen very often for him.”

It’s a transformative experience for clients, family, staff, the larger community!

And finally, why name your company “Cowtipping”? “Because it was the first poem we published,” Bryan says, “and we want always to keep our client’s work front and center. And, it’s the kind of story one of our students is most likely to tell. Nothing deep or philosophical, but random and fun”—and respectful and promising, recognizing the “infinite worth” of each person!

### Enjoy the Moment

See rain feels  
Like freezing, tastes  
Like rain drops  
Smells like umbrella

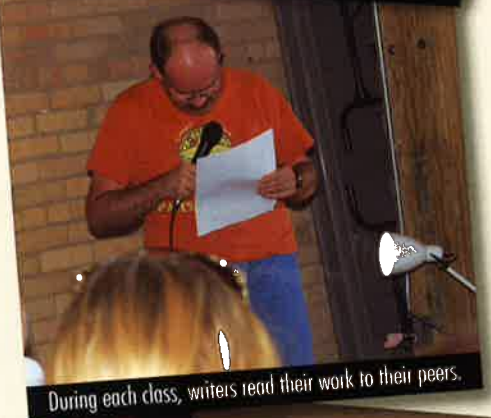
### Deal with it

Go with the flow  
I don’t know  
Stay focused  
Pay attention  
I don’t know  
Stay on task  
Stay focused  
Tough to swim under the sea  
Dolphins and mushrooms

Poems by Daniel Weldin.  
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Classes prepared clients and scribes for writing.



During each class, writers read their work to their peers.



At a final gala event, writers read their published work.



Parents were excited to participate!