

WALKING THROUGH LIFE'S OPEN DOORS

By Terri White

As I look back on my life, I've always been writing something and teaching someone. I never really gave it much thought because it was natural for me. Easy and enjoyable. So when I married in 1977 and started my family, homeschooling was an obvious choice.

In those early days, though, curriculum was sparse, so I created my own for some subjects. As a kinesthetic learner, I, of course, used a hands-on approach.

Over my two decades of homeschooling, I also tutored other children – usually in their composition skills since I was a writer. In the '90's, I wrote a couple of books and numerous articles for educational magazines.

After I finished homeschooling our last child in 1999, a family asked me to teach their teenagers English composition skills. I decided to ask other homeschooled teens to join the class. And so it began.

I patterned my first class after the approach I used with my own children. Eventually, I compiled my lessons into three textbooks: English Composition 1, 2, and 3 – *Write Right with Mrs. White* was born. (writerightwithmrswhite.com)

Soon, in addition to my classes at home, I was also teaching in homeschool co-ops and a couple of private schools.

Eventually, I formed T.E.A.C.H. Cleburne in 2013, gathering several teachers in one location to teach à la carte high school classes two to three days a week. Then we added middle school, numerous electives, and finally kindergarten through fifth grades.

With twenty teachers, we offer classes on two campuses. Students can take one class or several with the lessons taught in the classroom reinforced by homework on their off days.

All these years I have taught my high school English composition classes and even a couple of middle school English classes. As the founder/director of T.E.A.C.H. and as a teacher, life has not slowed down for me at age 72. Frankly, I don't foresee it happening in the near future either.

Meanwhile, I have also taught a few of the parents of my students. One of them, Maureen Benke, who is working on her master's degree, approached me about tutoring her. So we plowed in. Truthfully, she didn't need much help, but we sure enjoyed our sessions.

Because of that, in January 2019 I hit her up with the idea of forming a lunch club. We invited our mutual friends and started off with a bang. By no means are we a snooty, exclusive club. We're just a group of ladies who enjoy each other's company.

Sometimes we meet at a restaurant, other times we meet in one of our homes. In December we joined Mug on the Square's Christmas Paint Party. Now that was fun! Inspired, Mayre Stewart volunteered to give us a painting lesson in January. Learning from a master may draw out the artist in each of us!

Then this winter we plan to meet at Breck & Co. to create our own potted plants. We're loving the companionship as well as these artsy opportunities Cleburne now offers.

All this from a young woman who loved to write and teach. Who homeschooled her kids when it was unpopular. Who offered her services to her students' parents. Who fell in love with her Lunch Club ladies.

I'm just a girl who has walked through open doors during my lifetime. And, oh, how rich it has been. Here's to life! You never know what doors will open for you.