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News Release

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Riverdale YMHA Proudly Announces Launch of Writers' Center Classes Begin March 2012

Fiction, Memoir, and Poetry Workshops Taught by Award-Winning Writers

NEW YORK, January 31, 2012—The Riverdale YM-YWHA has launched its first ever Writers' Center for those who want to learn, develop, and master the craft of writing. The Writers' Center will open its doors in March for the spring semester and will offer writers of all levels and with various interests the chance to participate in writing classes taught by published authors and teachers.

Marti Michael, Executive Director at the Riverdale YM-YWHA, is thrilled to house this new Center. "Riverdale is a dynamic, mixed community teeming with students, artists, and educators. Our community is a center of creativity that attracts people of all ages, many of whom have relocated from Manhattan. The time is ripe for the Y to open this Center where members of our community do not have to travel to Manhattan or to Westchester to be part of a writing community. We have all the right ingredients right here in our own back yard."

The first three instructors are Riverdale residents, who have all won many awards, including the coveted Bronx Council on the Arts BRIO Award. Amy Gottlieb will offer "Writing a Spiritual Memoir." Sarah Stern will lead "How to Make a Poem." Bruce Tallerman will teach "Elements of Fiction Writing." Please see full class descriptions and bios of instructors below.

Each class will run for two hours and be structured around a workshop format. The classes will offer a positive, encouraging approach to critique. The goal of each class will be to provide students constructive feedback based on a consensus of comments as well as instructor insight, and in the process, inspire and guide students to begin, improve, or complete a portion of work.

Executive Director Michael added, "These three classes are the kick-off offerings for the Center. As The Writers' Center grows, we will hopefully be expanding the choice of classes to include Screenwriting, Journalism, and Writing for Children." The Center also plans to include a culminating event where students will have a final reading of their works.

For more information on class offerings and to register please visit: www.riverdaley.org

The Writing Center at the Riverdale Y Spring Classes

Writing a Spiritual Memoir

The art of writing a memoir is a way to uncover meaningful narrative threads in the story of one's life. The popular genre of spiritual memoir derives from this process, as writers make connections between transcendent and ordinary moments. In this workshop, participants will explore examples of spiritual memoir, write from guided prompts, and find direction for crafting memoirs, mosaics, and essays. This workshop is designed for writers who already have a memoir in progress, as well as those who are looking for a way to begin.

Instructor: Amy Gottlieb

Amy Gottlieb's poetry, short fiction, and essays have appeared in *Lilith*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Presentense*, *Nashim*, *the Forward*, *Zeek*, *Fiera Lingue*, *Other Voices*, *American Public Media*, and elsewhere. She was awarded a Poetry Residency from the Bronx Writers Center, a BRIO Award for Poetry from the Bronx Council on the Arts, an Honorable Mention from the Ellen LaForge Poetry Prize, and held an arts fellowship at the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education. A longtime editor of *Judaica*, Amy now works as an independent book editor, writer, and publishing consultant.

How to Make a Poem

In a supportive workshop setting, poets of all levels—from the newly inspired to the veteran—are encouraged to join this intimate class with the goals of growing as writers and readers of poetry. Participants will share their work with the intention of creating new poems, revising existing ones, and finding new ways to push the boundaries of poetic expression. Poets will have the opportunity to build a vibrant writing community through discussions of their own work and explorations of poems written by leading contemporary poets.

Instructor: Sarah Stern

Sarah Stern's first book *Another Word for Love* was published by Finishing Line Press in 2011. Her poems have appeared in magazines, anthologies, and online, and most recently in *Epiphany* and *Verse Daily*. Sarah is a four-time winner of the BRIO Award for Poetry from the Bronx Council on the Arts, and received Honorable Mentions from the Anna Davidson Rosenberg Awards and *Lilith Magazine's* Poetry Prize. Sarah has worked as a journalist, editor, writer, and press officer.

Elements of Fiction Writing

The American novelist Willa Cather advised writers to “stop writing, start remembering.” Stories are born in our unique experiences. Our imaginations make those stories live and breathe, and connect them to the broader human experience. This course is designed for anyone who has a story to tell and wants to craft it into a completed work of fiction. We will read and comment on each other's work in a supporting and encouraging setting. Along the way, we will use examples from great works of fiction to guide our own choices about characterization, dialogue, voice, and other elements. And we'll engage in exercises to prompt our imaginations and take the leaps of faith that continue us on our journey. This course is for beginning to mid-level fiction writers of all ages.

Instructor: Bruce Tallerman

Bruce Tallerman's fiction has been published in a number of literary magazines, including *Southern California Review*, *Laurel Review*, *Quarter After Eight*, *Paterson Review*, and *Southern Anthology*. He is a two-time recipient of the BRIO Award for Fiction from the Bronx Council on the Arts. Bruce has studied creative writing at The New School, UCLA, and the Sewanee Writers' Conference, and has taught fiction at Gotham Writers' Workshop and Riverdale Community Center.

The Riverdale Y Mission

The mission of the Riverdale YM-YWHA is to be the hub that brings together members of the Jewish and wider community. At the Y, individuals and families of all backgrounds and abilities gather to grow, to learn, and to deepen their understanding of themselves and their connections to one another. Rooted in Jewish values, our cultural, social, educational, health and wellness programs offer members of all ages multiple pathways into the richness of our local community life. Through our programs and partnerships, we strive to improve the quality of life in the Riverdale community and celebrate its uniqueness and its diversity.