“Writer’s Matter allows students to open up and be themselves, to share and trust one another...it’s a community we create.

I’ve been with the School District since January 2003, so this is officially my 10th Anniversary. That sounds wonderful to me. I currently teach at Wagner Middle School in the West Oak Lane section of Philadelphia. I really enjoy teaching here particularly because of the staff because they are warm and welcoming.

In my 10 years of teaching, I must say that I have never encountered a program such as the Writer’s Matter Program. This program encourages students to write. I’m talking about the kind of writing that is inspirational and revealing. This type of writing makes my students interested in writing because they are writing about the person who they know the best, themselves. It has been such a wonderful experience watching their paper come to life just by using a paper and pencil and thinking of the things that are meaningful and affects them. After the writing process has occurred, my students love to share their work. Not all of the students, however. When a child is young and in the sixth grade, sometimes it is still hard for them to share personal aspects of their young lives. Let’s be honest, it is hard for some adults to express themselves effectively.

When I first entered the program, I didn’t know what to expect. I was worried that I would not do a good job getting my students to write. I was completely wrong. They surprised me. Opening up their world to different types of literature and poetry enabled them to open themselves up to me and to one another. We read poetry and literature that had the elements of literature and standards that are required of students. Once these standards were learned, students were able to apply the concept in their own writings. Most of it came out in figurative language, imagery and sensory detailing. More and more students began to share their work in the classroom and when it came time for their program at LaSalle, many of them were all too excited to read their writings. They were very proud.

During the summer, after my first year teaching through this program, students continued to write. They were inspired to be poets, in their own way. They wrote about everything but mostly about their experiences with family and friends. I was even able to put some of my old students into the Writer’s Matter After School Program here at Wagner.

I plan on always using the Writer’s Matter Program because it can be used in so many different ways. The wonderful thing about the program is getting ideas from other teachers and collaborating when we get together at our meetings. They are meaningful and productive. I am so happy I have been introduced to this program.