

## TALKING POINTS

### **What made you give up such a successful career in television advertising and a six-figure salary to become a teacher?**

I will always value the experience and I am proud of that career and its financial rewards. But, as time passed, I began to think that it couldn't all be just about the money. I wondered where I was going to leave my mark on society. I wanted to give something back to my community. Now, as a teacher, every single day I can see the impact I have on the lives of my students and it's a wonderful and humbling feeling. My seventh-graders are filled with a sense of accomplishment and I like knowing they might have it a little easier in life because they can learn from my experiences.

### **Surely there must have been people who thought you were crazy to give up the money.**

Absolutely, but I think it was worth it. I am lucky I had such an extraordinary group of students my first year. That teaching year was one of the best I have ever had. Thankfully, the second group I had did not come first, or else I would have returned to corporate America. I don't cash big commission checks anymore, but the rewards for my students and me are priceless.

### **What compelled you to write this book?**

I received a letter from a former student sharing some very kind words about what she remembered from my class and I realized kids take away lessons that are not always part of our plans. Education is so important and the relationship between students and teachers is so pivotal, yet it has been two whole generations since teachers were celebrated in books and films. I wanted to put into words a story based on how memorable teachers influenced my own life. That was where I started, but the story is fictional because I got creative in constructing thirteen types of teachers we meet in every classroom, on any school campus, in any city.

### **Do you think your book will elevate the status of teachers?**

I believe there are only thirteen styles of teachers we meet in the classroom. I hope teachers will read this book to discover which teaching style is their own. Early in our careers, teachers are encouraged to always self-reflect. I think this book will inspire teachers to look at the characters who are the real hero teachers and find pieces to emulate. Most teachers on any campus serve as heroes who come to the rescue of our kids, whether preparing them for jobs, teaching them new subjects, saving them from bullies, turning them on to new possibilities in their lives, or helping them navigate the often choppy waters of pop culture or the influences of the Internet. I feel the book brings to light the importance of having real role models in our nation's schools. And someone with real heart and soul will find a way to

afford serving in this capacity, a rare breed of career that has such a low commensurate pay but expects an inordinate amount from educators.

### **Who should read your book?**

Teachers should read it for the reminder that for the one child sitting in the back of your class, you just might be the best part of his day. Parents should read it as a way to talk to their kids about the teachers who made an impact in their own life, and how we should value education and educators, and what we should expect from them. Students older than sixth grade should read it as a reminder to thank a teacher. Our greatest reward is to know we helped you in some way.

### **Do you have a particular message for students? And for teachers?**

I think it is important to understand that their teacher is human and has a unique personality just like they do. For the teachers, the message is to be aware that what students are taking away from our classroom ultimately has very little to do with our lesson plans, and everything to do with the connection, or dis-connection, we have made with them. I hope my book opens up dialogue in the home for parents and their kids to talk about school and the teachers who have influenced their lives.

### **Do you see your book surviving the test of time?**

Yes, I think it will have a long shelf life. It offers a different message to each reader for every stage of life. I want it to rank right up there with the classics for future generations to enjoy.

*(Heroes Don't Always Wear Capes* by Stefania Shaffer; ISBN: 0-9772325; \$14.95; soft cover: 5.5 x 8.5; 160-pages, with Discussion Questions; PRESSMAN BOOKS; Available through [Amazon](#), [Kindle](#), [Nook](#) and author-direct at [stefaniashaffer.com](http://stefaniashaffer.com))

## PRAISE AND ENDORSEMENTS

“An authentic picture of a teacher’s life...whoever went to school will immediately recognize incidents and types of teachers in this spirited book any student will be able to identify with.”—Dr. Robert L. McCaffrey, Superintendent, Galt (CA) School District

“Through laughter and tears, this book reminds teachers that we teach...to the heart and soul of our students.” —Jerrianna Boer, Principal, Modesto (CA) School District

“Inspiring...humorous...riveting...this book will make you laugh, cry, and reminisce about childhood adventures.”—Kathy Nelson, Teacher, Elk Grove (CA) Unified School District

"A witty, heartwarming, can't-put-it-down plunge into the life of a character we can all relate to." --Aimee Walsh, "Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America"

"An authentic picture of a teacher’s life..." --Dr. Robert L. McCaffrey, Superintendent, Galt (CA) School District

"...so rich in humor that you can open it anywhere and smile..." --Tonja Kendrick, Marriage and Family Therapist

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