

Alberta was born in Texas but has lived all of her life in Portland. She is 75 years old. She sews, crochets, plays piano, and even bowls. She spends a lot of time with the “rugsrats” — her great nieces and nephews who are 10, 12 and 13 years old — and writes a lot about them, too. Alberta attributes her recovery from a stroke to her willingness to participate in any activity she can. It’s one of the things she’s proudest of.



How did you first hear of the Write Around Portland workshop?

Nancy, the Activities Director at Laurelhurst Village told me about the workshop. She really works hard trying to make it pleasant for us. I enjoy the things she sets up. And, I will try anything.

How has it been to be in the workshop?

I have fun. I enjoy it and I’m learning something. Since I had a stroke, talking is a little difficult for me. Here I find I have time to say what I want to say and maybe people can understand. I enjoy listening to what the other people in the group write, too. I enjoy writing and I feel like this workshop is helping me.

How do you think the workshop is helping you?

It’s helping me be more relaxed and pay a little more attention to what I’m talking about. And especially it helps me think. I’m not as mean as I was.

I have a hard time picturing you being mean.

Well, maybe not mean but I think I get along with people a little easier now.

How does the workshop help you get along with people?

I’ve watched how people get along with people in the workshop. Everybody comes in here and has a smile on their face and they seem to want to do something. I take what I learn here and apply it to people outside of the workshop.

You said the stroke made it harder to talk. Is writing different for you since having a stroke?

I can’t physically write as good as I’d like to, but it means a great deal to talk and have someone [a volunteer scribe] to write it. I really enjoyed that in this workshop. As I talk about whatever we’re writing about, there’s someone right next to me to say, “I’ll write it.” [The volunteer] writes what I say. She lets me do the talking.

What do you enjoy most about the workshop experience?

Well, I look forward to coming every Saturday and trying to write and listening to what everyone else has written. It just makes me feel good.

Every time I walk in the group, I just want to laugh. I know that there are all of these smiling faces here and I want to laugh. I write something and I get tickled. I don’t realize how funny my story is until everyone starts laughing.

Have you shared the writing that you've done here with anyone outside of the group?

I shared it with my daughters, my brother, my girlfriends, my boyfriends, my neighbors, you name it. They laugh and say, "You wrote that?"

How did it feel for them to see your writing in the anthology?

They said, "Oh my gosh. What's Alberta doing now?" I said, "You haven't seen nothing yet!"