

Barbara Esham



What do you hope *The Adventures of Everyday Geniuses* accomplishes?

Everyone hits an academic or social roadblock along the way. Each of us has a learning style or learning preference. Respecting each other's "style" is critical for diversity and emotional intelligence in the classroom--and the adult world. Promoting self advocacy, emotional intelligence, and respect for others are the main goals for this series.

Are your characters based on you or people in your life?

Yes! Many of the characters are based on classmates of my children, children from my own educational experience, myself (I was a "wiggle fidget"), and my own children.

Based on your research, to what extent is learning differences a part of American society?

According to studies from some of the top university research centers in the US, one out of every five students will eventually reach an academic roadblock because of his or her learning style.

What is the most memorable experience in your writing career?

My most memorable experience was getting a phone call, at my home, from Dr. Edward Hallowell. He simply called to tell me that he loved my book project, and that he would gladly offer a letter to parents and educators for each book. I was a bit nervous receiving a call from an internationally recognized, New York Times bestselling author/expert, at home.

What do you feel is the biggest difference between when you were in school and children in school now?

I am hopeful that the "science" of learning will become firmly rooted in the classroom. Although we have come a long way since I was in school, I am afraid to say we still have much to accomplish.

What do you most enjoy about the creative process?

I love the creative process. I love to listen to children as they explain their off the wall inventions. The "what if" is a phrase that rings throughout the conversations I have with my own children. Free association is our entertainment. Creativity sets the stage for future achievement and an exciting adult life.

Did you write as a child?

No. Writing was something I avoided at all costs. Creating a paragraph was grueling for me; language arts was my least favorite subject. I did, however, have many stories in my mind, and my imagination and analytical skills were my strengths. Not until I learned to type/keyboard did my ideas flow onto the page. My confidence as a writer did not bloom until adulthood.

Author Barbara Esham was one of those kids who couldn't resist performing a pressure test on a pudding cup. She has always been a "free association" thinker, finding life far more interesting while in a state of abstract thought. Barbara lives on the East Coast with her three daughters. Together, in Piagetian fashion, they have explored the ideas and theories behind the definitions of intelligence, creativity, learning, and success. Barb researches and writes from her home office, in the spare time available between car pools, homework, and bedtime.

*Barbara's book series, *The Adventures of Everyday Geniuses*, received the 2008 Parents' Choice Awards, were featured on the American Library Association Booklist, and listed on the Reading Rockets Recommended Readings. In addition, Ms. Esham speaks and headlines numerous conferences and education events including the National Association of Gifted Children Conference, Organization Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted, and the State of Maryland International Reading Association Council.*

What inspired *The Adventures of Everyday Geniuses*?

The *Adventures of Everyday Geniuses* was actually a 1:00 a.m. brainstorm, about four years ago. My youngest daughter was having difficulty with early literacy skills (learning to read and spell), and I realized at that point the lack of resources for children; inspirational resources to offer them realistic examples of triumph over difficulty. I found that many of the books available did not tap into the dynamics of the teacher/parent, teacher/child, parent/child, or peer relationships. The struggle that a child experiences when he or she hits an academic roadblock are delicate and difficult to approach. I thought the series was important for all involved, not just the child dealing with a specific learning style.

Please provide a glimpse into your current project.

My current project includes four books, due to release Spring 2010. I will not give away the titles, but they are geared to helping children figure out how they feel about the given topic. Each story will continue to be told from the child's perspective, hoping to capture the thoughts and feelings that children might experience.