

The Power of the Written Word

Sometimes, writing it all down is what it takes to release old experiences and memories and to become truly free. That's just what two individuals who receive employment services from UES in Geneva did. Louis Quethera and Courtney Hull are both published authors.

Courtney, who writes under the pseudonym Gert, is the author of "Life in My Shoes," an autobiographical account that spans one year (2006 – 2007) in her life. At age 8, Courtney was in a car accident that left her with a traumatic brain injury. She spent years in and out of hospitals, psychiatric centers, and group homes. She got in a fist fight in high school – a bully and his mother were calling names – and this incident prompted her to write it all down. She also learned to stand up for herself.

"Writing the book made me feel accomplished," said Courtney. "I want to leave my mark on the world."

Now 26, Courtney lives in Naples, NY and holds a part-time job through UES at Dollar General. She loves her independent life and has a second book in the works now, entitled "9 ½" (her shoe size).

Louis remembers the last day of his freshman year at Syracuse University in 1977. He had had too much to drink, and made the mistake of getting in a car. That car hit a telephone pole at 90 mph, leaving Louis in a coma for six days. The crash also left him with temporal lobe epilepsy. Louis eventually got well enough to return to SU to finish college under the care of a psychiatrist. It was then that he encountered what he calls "a lifetime of duplicity and bureaucracy."

"One of my epilepsy symptoms is a compulsion to write," explains Louis. "Putting it all down on paper was cathartic, a release for me. No one understands what I've been through. I got to tell me story to the world."

Writing under the pen name Louis Que, he has recorded his trials and tribulations in two books: "The Duplicity Factor: An American Story" and "Prisoner of the System." The volumes reveal some of the most frustrating periods of his life as he grappled with



barriers that kept him in a variety of institutions for years. Louis is now 55 and lives in Geneva. He volunteers at the local ARC and works at Dunkin Donuts a few hours a week. He enjoys his apartment overlooking Seneca Lake and, like Courtney, also has another book underway.