

# Denekas encourages writing

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Local author Carol Denekas is a busy woman. Aside from family and work duties, Denekas has still found time to publish her debut novel and start the Red Barn Writers' Guild and Red Barn Young Writers' Guild for area writers. For Denekas writing has long been an inherent and important part of her life. "From a very early age, I was journaling and writing," Denekas said. "It came to me; it wasn't necessarily taught. Then at Luther, I took lots of writing classes. You learn about yourself as you write your characters. I think of it as problem solving. I like to mull things and think and put myself in other people's shoes. When you're building a character, you have those opportunities. It helps me reflect." This love of writing led to an attempt by Denekas to pursue publication of her first book, a romance novel, when she was in her 20s. However, she asked for her manuscript back before it could be published. "I wasn't ready to emotionally let go of it," Denekas said. "When you write something, it's very dear to you." Years later, at the urging of fellow local author Pat Jaeger, Denekas decided to try again. Now she is set to have her debut novel *Rescuing Love* published early next year through Tate Publishing, a Christian publisher in Oklahoma. "At Tate, I get to sign off on everything," Denekas said. "I have 100 percent control, which is really rare to find in the publishing business. It's important to me that I retain the rights and that I get a say."



The Red Barn Writers' Guild was born when Denekas realized there was no haven for writers in a rural area. "Writing is a powerful tool for self-expression no matter what your age is," Denekas said. "Writing can free our imagination from the everyday boundaries that sometimes stifle us. The Red Barn Writers' Guild is about practicing that freedom and having support while that creativity unfolds." Xavier Elementary teacher Kristie Cassidy brought up her students and their interest in writing

to Denekas, who in turn came up with the idea to create a group for youth writers. Cassidy sees the Red Barn Young Writers' Guild as an excellent opportunity for young writers. "I was really excited to have some students who were so passionate about writing that I wanted them to stay feeling that way about it," said Cassidy. "I hope that through Carol's club kids can see that anyone can write. It doesn't matter what age you are, if you are excited and passionate about it, go for it, and grow as people and writers."

"Helping young people write is important, as they are looking at how to connect to the world around them," Denekas said. "Writing can help ground and release them as they work through their struggles of growing through their adolescence." Both groups support writers' personal goals of getting works published, but that is not the overall purpose. "I think it's really more of a safe place where people can come and express themselves and feel good about it," Denekas said.

Denekas also would like the group to become involved in the community in some way and raise money to donate to schools or libraries to support literacy. "Our goals are not just to have a private group that no one has heard of but to have a presence in the community," Denekas said. The Red Barn Writers' Guild and the Red Barn Young Writers' Guild meet on the afternoon of Saturday July 20 at Denekas's residence. For more information, visit [caroldenekas.com](http://caroldenekas.com).

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