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Rosemary Ruthven and I worked as partners on the development and implementation of a large award winning Family Literacy program from the years 1998-2002. My role was that of Program Manager and she was the Curriculum Specialist. Although those were our official job titles, we both worked equally with the families and teachers. The Family Literacy project served a low socio economic school community in an urban Southern California school district. The majority of the families spoke Spanish as the primary language and had immigrated to the United States from Mexico and Central America. All participants were considered families in poverty.

As I write about Rosemary and her role in the development and success of the program I am filled with great fondness of our time working together. Rosemary has undoubtedly the strongest work ethic of anyone I have ever met. Not only did she teach classes (after a full days work) at the Family Literacy nights for the children and their families, she wrote and implemented literacy curriculum for the teachers to implement in after school programs. We used to chuckle that we were running the 24 hour a day, 7 day a week school, since there were family literacy activities scheduled before, during and after the school day. There were even activities on Saturday!

Rosemary sailed through each activity, whether it was coaching a teacher or working with parents and their children to write poems with a smile on her face. Her positive temperament was contagious and it was obvious that she enjoyed working with the teachers, children and families. There have been many articles that charge that working in an inner city school is stressful, negative and can lead to burn out. Rosemary belied that claim on a daily basis.

Rosemary gently led the teachers, to understand that by tearing down the walls between home and school, and creating parallel literacy practices at home and at school, their students would have more academic success. And, by using her Spanish bilingual skills, she encouraged the families to include literacy practices into their everyday lives.

For me, working with Rosemary was fun! How great to work with such a knowledgeable partner! We worked hard at school, traveled to conferences and schools all over the United States to share our success stories and pick up the awards given to all the hard working participants of our project.

When an opening for a Language Arts Lecturer opened at the University where I worked, of course, I recommended Rosemary for the position. When Rosemary was the faculty lecturer, the preservice teachers enrolled in her class roared "she has such high expectations and I am learning so much".

When Rosemary departed our project all were very sad. However, she left behind a the curriculum well organized and easy to implement. As I prepare for my university classes I often draw on materials that Rosemary developed, and remember our times together with great happiness.