



**To Teach is to Inspire as to Inspire is to Teach**  
**By: Megan Tower**

In sixth grade, I started to watch the world around me unfurl before my eyes. I began to see people as more than just faces and actions; I started to see books as more than tortuous devices. New facets began to appear in the world I already knew, and my life was changed forever.

Every once in a while, you meet someone that you will always remember for as long as you will live. I met a woman like that, and had I not met her, I would have turned out so much different than I am today. Her name is Rhea Pulliam, and she became the parts of a mother that I never had. She was supportive in the development of my mind and interests, where as my own mother was reluctant to let in any outside knowledge. She taught me that the world could be anything that you made of it; it could be something to fight for, or it could not be worth fighting for at all. She showed me just how far the depths of the human mind could go, and what you could do with the abilities you found there.

Before I met Mrs. Pulliam, I was starting off onto a path that would have made me think and act like everyone else around me, but she saw something worth saving inside of me, and she pulled me onto a little side road that didn't seem worth the wait or the energy to travel down. This road I saw looked deserted and unending, but the beginning of the road is usually the part most misinterpreted. I took the chance, and took one step forward, and little by little the path started to unroll into more than it seemed; around every corner was new knowledge, new adventure, and new changes of mind.

Mrs. Pulliam embodied every trait of a housewife: she was kind and always bubbling over with enthusiasm for the most miniscule things, and she always brought us home made pastries and dishes that she began to croon over as soon as she stepped into the classroom. She loved probing our minds, past the limits that society had set for us to uncover the things we weren't even aware of existing inside of us. She loved finding new ways for our classes to harness knowledge and use it in the right way for as long as we could retain it.

Mrs. Pulliam shepherded a small group of us through most of our middle school years, providing opportunities to explore new parts of our local world, in things like government. Every year, we took part in a program called Model United Nations, which is sort of like a junior branch of the real United Nations. We would be assigned a country, usually undeveloped, and were challenged with the task of finding an economically realistic solution to a local problem there. Sometimes those problems were diseases, civil disputes, or even overpopulation. We had to go through the process of creating resolutions and bills and even running our proposals through a student council to see if our hard work was really worth the effort. If it was, we went on to final rounds, in front of a massive crowd of peers and proposed our ideas again. At the end of the day, you could have walked away with a shiny bronze plaque and a new perspective on the world.

I learned the basics of etymology [the study of word origins] and learned how to find out what something meant using some pretty advanced context clues, which in turn developed my vocabulary to a higher level than I had ever thought possible. I explored the works of Shakespeare, and other epic ballads such as Beowulf and Lord Lochinvar. Those

gave me a fiery taste for fantasy and the myths behind society. I loved finding new things that expressed the ways people dealt with the things that they couldn't understand, such as ancient peoples forming 'gods' of rain, sun, and other everyday things, as well as more serious things such as fertility, war, and destruction. In that little class, my love for culture blossomed into something that's now intertwined in my everyday life. Every chance I get to learn about a new place and a new race, I take it.

I plan on getting my bachelor's Degree in Anthropology and Linguistics, a subject I never would have uncovered a desire for had it not been for Mrs. Pulliam. She became one of my heroes in life, something I've found is hard to be for me. I learned to love every aspect of a person, every trait, every reason behind action, and its all because the mask that society stamps on at an early age was metaphorically pulled off by someone who cared enough for us to not let us live life without seeing the true colors of the world.



Toby Woodmore, Demetrice Mitchell, Megan Tower, Dan Tollett, Clint Saterfield