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## OLD LYME AUTHOR'S BOOK RECOGNIZES THE POWER OF WRITING TO ACHIEVE DREAMS

Dreams of a Wingless Child, a collection of poetic reflections on nature and life penned by Mary O'Connor of Old Lyme, Connecticut, has been published by Wheatmark, Inc., Tucson, AZ. Written for all ages, the collection is offered as an encouragement to the reader to find happiness in simplicity, in imagination, in being in touch with whatever lies behind the obvious.

The book is dedicated to the Freedom Writers, a Long Beach, California, class of students who recorded their thoughts, fears and dreams in a daily diary as a means of dealing with issues of racial tension and anger. Their overwhelmingly powerful writings, eventually published as *The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them*, served as the genesis of the Paramount Pictures 2007 release, *Freedom Writers*.

"Writing," says O'Connor, "has always provided me with a means of channeling thoughts and observations in ways that open my mind to new possibilities and connections. My hope in dedicating *Dreams of a Wingless Child* to the Freedom Writers is to reinforce their recognition of the power of writing to deal with adversities faced in daily life, and in so doing, to support them in their goal of achieving dreams for themselves and the world." All proceeds from the sale of the book are being contributed to the Freedom Writers Foundation, which seeks to decrease high school dropout rates throughout the United States through the replication and enhancement of the Freedom Writers teaching method.

An award-winning poet, O'Connor draws on the creatures, rhythms and forces of the New England shoreline as her primary source of imagery and turns them into metaphors for the emotions and milestones of life. Written with whimsy, playfulness and clarity of observation, each piece looks at ordinary encounters in unexpected ways, touching on subjects as varied as the split heart hoof of a deer, the presumed finality of stone and darkness, or the flight of a butterfly. It is through these connections, these fleeting moments of insight, that she finds a sense of place, and with it a realization that one need not look far to discover an element of peace, of celebration, of the fulfillment of a dream. It is from one such poem, the *Flight of the Monarch*, that the title of the book was drawn.

Capping a professional career that began in journalism and continued through the multimedia and creative worlds of marketing and communications, O'Connor retired in 2007 as executive director of the Guilford Art Center. Much of her work has been published in nature and inspirational journals and honored in competition, including by the Thomas Merton Foundation 2003 Poetry of the Sacred Competition, judged by the former U.S. Poet Laureate, Stanley Kunitz. When not writing poetry, she particularly enjoys painting in watercolor and acrylics. She is an associate artist of the Lyme Art Association and of the Mystic Arts Center and serves as a director of Care & Share of East Lyme, Inc.

For information on *Dreams of a Wingless Child* author presentations or for book ordering information, visit [www.mary-oconnor.com](http://www.mary-oconnor.com). The book is available locally at Bayberries, Niantic; Emerson & Cook Book Company, Old Saybrook; and Bank Square Books, Mystic.