



Submitted photo courtesy of Holly Lorincz

Though she no longer teaches high school, Holly Lorincz is still helping potential writers find their voice.

HOLLY LORINCZ:

teacher, coach, author, editor, mother — and one ‘Smart Mouth’

There are numerous well-worn clichés about adversity, such as “everything happens for a reason” or “when life give you lemons, make lemonade.” It’s easy to imagine that users of these clichés have never faced any serious adversity themselves.

Manzanita resident and teacher Holly Lorincz could easily be forgiven for surrendering when she was sucker-punched by adversity. But instead, she chose to redefine herself and began living the dream of every college graduate with an English degree: being a published author.

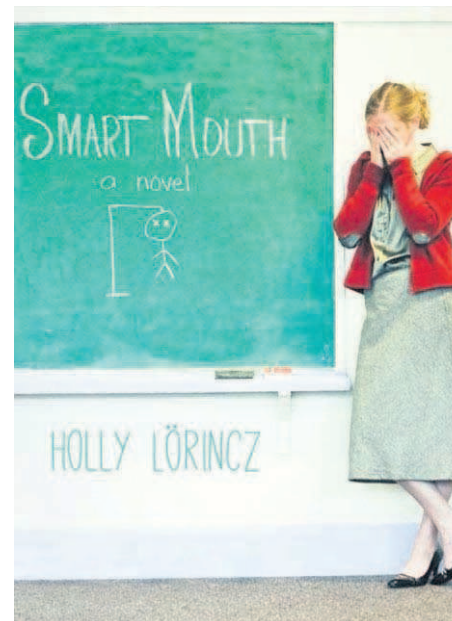
For 15 years, Lorincz taught language arts at Neah-Kah-Nie High School in Rockaway Beach. She also served as head coach of the

speech team.

She loved teaching, and it showed. During her tenure, Lorincz earned Oregon Speech Educator of the Year in 2007, plus two national educator awards from the National Federation of High Schools in 2007 and 2008. Her speech team won the OSAA State Speech Championship two times and she coached six kids to nine individual state champion trophies.

“I loved teaching and coaching because you could see students’ tangible progress,” Lorincz says.

A few years ago, Lorincz began struggling with fatigue and dizziness. She initially put it off to general stress, but they were symptoms of a much larger problem: She had contracted



Submitted photo

“Smart Mouth” by Manzanita author Holly Lorincz won the bronze medal for popular fiction at the 2014 Independent Publisher Book Awards.

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mononucleosis, a virus that sapped her physical and mental stamina.

It got so bad, it forced her to take a leave of absence from teaching.

Lorincz recalls often not even having the strength to get out of bed in the morning. “I was weak and dizzy all the time,” she says. “I couldn’t stand in front of students for an entire school day.”

Though she tried to return to her beloved profession, it soon became clear that her leave from teaching would become permanent.

Lorincz says submitting her letter of resignation was the hardest thing she ever had to do. “Just like that, my identity as a teacher and coach was gone,” she says. “I felt like the tether that had been holding me in place was cut and I had no attachment to anything.”

With a young son to raise and no idea what a lifelong teacher with a chronic illness was sup-

posed to do next, Lorincz turned to writing.

Her first novel, “Smart Mouth,” was born from her forced separation from teaching.

“I spent a lot of time alone in the attic all day, talking to myself,” Lorincz says.

The ensuing story came directly from her life as a teacher. “Smart Mouth” follows Addy Taylor, a newly minted high school teacher with a mountain of bills who is horrified when she is recruited to coach the school’s speech team.

As the saying goes, write what you know.

“Addy is my voice,” Lorincz says.

The novel was extremely well-received, winning the bronze medal for popular fiction at the 2014 Independent Publisher Book Awards.

Suddenly, writing was Lorincz’s profession and she dove right in.

She worked as a literary agent with the well-regarded Chip MacGregor, with whom she co-authored two industry books, “Step by Step Pitches & Proposals: A Workbook for Writers” and “How Can I Find a Literary Agent? And 101 Other Questions Asked by Writers.”

She also opened her own editing business, Lorincz Literary Services, which she runs out of Manzanita.

“This community has been so supportive,” she says. “Lots of people had my back and believed in me.”

She has returned the favor by presenting writing workshops at the Hoffman Center for the Arts.

When asked for tips by potential authors, Lorincz’s advice is simple: “Read as many good books as you can, in whatever genre you like,” she says.

Though she still deals with her illness’ effects, she has learned how to pace herself and work through them.

When she’s not writing, Lorincz attends writing conferences around the country and has lectured at several, something that fans the embers of her inner teacher.

There’s even a television pilot adaptation for “Smart Mouth,” written by award-winning screenwriter Bryan Marvis.

Lorincz calls her evolution from teacher to author the life every English major dreams about.

That doesn’t mean she doesn’t miss her first love. “I’d go back to teaching kids in a heartbeat if I could,” she says.

the arts

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Story by DAN HAAG