

Literary Tools and Literary Engineers ***SO ALL CAN SOAR***

Benicia CA . . . It was the dream of becoming a pilot and doing for others that motivated Andre Lewis to start **Literary Engineers**, a publication company that creates customized literature written by Lewis around socioeconomic issues for grade school children. In conjunction with **LE**, he initiated **Literary Tools**, a non-profit 501c(3), which distributes these books to children, schools and communities at no cost.

“I knew to make my dream of flying a reality I needed to work hard and get a good education. Though my circumstances were not always easy, I was able to reach my goal and become a pilot. This boyhood dream of flying was the catalyst for my first book, *I Want to Fly*. It was with this book I realized that I could use my story to challenge children to make their dreams come true,” explains Lewis, a pilot in the Air Force for 9 years and a commercial pilot for 21 years. This book was the beginning of his second career as an author and speaker writing message-related books in order to modify behaviors and instill change while encouraging his readers to pursue their dreams.

Research has shown that it takes a significant emotional event to modify a child’s behavior after a certain age. “By planting the seed early in the learning stage, higher retention and adapting this behavior is greater,” adds Lewis. Studies also show that children who read are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college and move-on to have successful careers. And, adds Lewis, “fulfill their dreams.”

As Lewis began speaking at schools and distributing his first four books, a school district representative saw the power of his messaging and contracted Lewis to write a customized book incorporating the school district’s anti-bullying policy. Lewis welcomed the opportunity. He researched the best common practices, elicited input from social workers /counselors and created an entertaining, relatable story around bullying. The book was enhanced with action-packed, dynamic illustrations inspiring children, educating

adults/parents and mobilizing organizations on complex issues. This was the beginning of a venture that fulfilled his childhood desire to help and educate others while encouraging them to take flight and live their dreams.

Though Lewis is the “lead pilot”, he has been able to partner with corporations, civic groups and local governments who have assisted him in his goal to empower, encourage and educate students. “I had a teacher who encouraged me to become an engineer, which I did, as a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy with a degree in Astronautical Engineering. Not everyone has the good fortune to have a mentor. My partners in these projects become mentors with their support and participation.” *Let’s STEAM Ahead*, written in 2018, was sponsored by a grant from Valero and received support from Boeing, USAF, USAFA and SoftBank Robotics to inspire and support students to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math.

Since founding **LE** and **LT**, Lewis has authored 18 books – some his own message such as *A Daddy’s Dream*, written for his three daughters to creating stories requested by others to address gang violence, community service, and improving relationships between police and the community -- with more than one million copies distributed to children worldwide.

Lewis says, “I get to live out my dream of flying. Every child should have the opportunity to fulfill their dream because every child’s dream is special.”

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