



### Teaching Hope: Stories from the Freedom Writer Teachers and Erin Gruwell

The Freedom Writers, Erin Gruwell

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"There are lives lost in this book, and there are lives saved, too, if salvation means a young man or woman begins to feel deserving of a place on the planet. . . . What could be more soul-satisfying? These are the most influential professionals most of us will ever meet. The effects of their work will last forever." —from the foreword by Anna Quindlen

Now depicted in a bestselling book and a feature film, the Freedom Writers phenomenon came about in 1994 when Erin Gruwell stepped into Room 203 and began her first teaching job out of college. Long Beach, California, was still reeling from the deadly violence that erupted during the Rodney King riots, and the kids in Erin's classroom reflected the anger, resentment, and hopelessness of their community. Undaunted, Erin fostered an educational philosophy that valued and promoted diversity, tolerance, and communication, and in the process, she transformed her students' lives, as well as her own. Erin Gruwell and the Freedom Writers went on to establish the Freedom Writers Foundation to replicate the success of Room 203 and provide all students with hope and opportunities to realize their academic potential. Since then, the foundation has trained more than 150 teachers in the United States and Canada. **Teaching Hope** unites the voices of these Freedom Writer teachers, who share uplifting, devastating, and poignant stories from their classrooms, stories that provide insight into the struggles and triumphs of education in all of its forms.

Mirroring an academic year, these dispatches from the front lines of education take us from the anticipation of the first day to the disillusionment, challenges, and triumphs of the school year. These are the voices of teachers who persevere in the face of intolerance, rigid administration, and countless other challenges, and continue to reach out and teach those who are deemed unteachable. Their stories inspire everyone to make a difference in the world around them.



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