

Empish JeAnne Thomas is a freelance writer and disability advocate in Atlanta, Georgia. She combines both of her passions by writing interesting and compelling stories on disability-related issues, human interest stories and features.

Empish has spent the last few years working and volunteering in the disability community providing resources and advocacy. Taking this experience, she has expanded it into her writing producing pieces on disability issues that are both informative and inspirational. In these stories her purpose is to bring a positive and human angle that has been lacking in typical news stories on people with disabilities.

In addition to her writing on disability-related subjects, Empish has always enjoyed meeting and learning about interesting people. This curiosity has led her into a specialty of writing profiles. One of her first freelance assignments was writing a new business profile for her community paper. This one small story launched her into writing profiles on people and businesses. She later expanded her profile writing to national newspapers, magazines and website content. Her profiles center on compelling aspects of everyday people - whether it is their business, hobbies or community activities. She wrote a one-year profile column for her community paper on local hobby collectors. She currently writes a bimonthly career column for Dialogue Magazine; an international magazine for the blind. In this column she writes about blind cooks, newspaper reporters, travel agents, teachers and artists.

Besides writing articles for newspapers and magazines, Empish also updates and edits a community calendar for the blind through a service called NewsLine. The National Federation of the Blind sponsors this service and it allows blind and visually-impaired people to listen to national and local newspapers via their telephone.

Last summer Empish began working as an educational outreach coordinator for the Disability Resource Group; a grassroots advocacy organization. In this position she does outreach to women with disabilities on breast cancer education. She conducts presentations, writes articles, and assist women with finding accessible and affordable mammogram locations. As educational outreach coordinator, Empish gets a rewarding opportunity to advance her writing career and advocacy work.

When Empish is not writing she voluntarily produces a radio show for the blind called "Eye on Blindness". This show, broadcasted in Atlanta but can be listened to nationally over the Internet, is sponsored by the Georgia area Radio Reading Service. GaRRS provides around the clock reading of printed information to people who can't because of a disability. For the last 2 years she has highlighted interesting topics such as travel, employment, health and politics as it relates to the blind community.

Empish has used all her writing and career talents to mentor writers who are visually-impaired giving encouraging instruction, guidance and mutual support. For the last few years she has been a volunteer career mentor with the American Foundation for the Blind's Career connect interacting via e-mail with others who are interested in pursuing a freelance writing career.

When Empish first approached freelancing she was looking for a way to reenergize her writing not knowing how much success it would bring, the interesting people she would meet or impact. Empish is very grateful for the writing talents that she has and the enjoyment that it brings; and of course the income is nice too. She gets excited about the future and discovering more interesting stories yet to be told. Now, she has got to get back to the keyboard and writing her next great story!