

Amy BOVAIRD

Amy Bovaird grew up in northwest Pennsylvania. In 1982, she received her bachelor's degree with a double major in English Literature and Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) from Oklahoma Christian University. In 1995, Amy earned her master's degree in Bicultural Bilingual Studies at the University of Texas in San Antonio. In 2004, she earned an additional certificate in Language Teaching with honors from Cambridge University in England.

Amy has worked at many unusual jobs over the course of her life, from selling hats at Cedar Point, an amusement park, to bagging glass bottles for the medical industry. She has taught English to children and adults in seven countries around the globe and has visited thirty-three countries. She taught English to all ranks of international military personnel, ranging from privates to generals. Her field was Specialized English, with such topics as the Abrams Tank, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Map Reading, Naval Operations, and Leadership at Lackland Air Force Base.

At age 28, she was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) and declared legally blind. RP is a hereditary, degenerative eye disease that results in blindness. There is no cure to date. Today Amy has no peripheral vision. She jokes that she is at the end of the "tunnel" vision in her eyesight. She suffers from a dual disability: progressive vision and hearing loss. She is currently undergoing genetic testing to discover the cause of her hearing loss.

Amy's memoirs include: *Mobility Matters: Stepping Out in Faith*, *Cane Confessions: The Lighter Side to Mobility* and a memoir / devotional, *Seeking Solace: Finding Joy After Loss*.

In 2015, Amy joined a group of blind professionals who volunteer their time to help others cope with blindness at VisionAware.org, an outreach website now under the auspices of the American Printing House.

In 2016, Ohio Valley University, Amy's undergraduate institution, awarded her the Distinguished Medal of Literature for *Mobility Matters*.

Amy is an active member of several community groups, which include Pennwriters, West PA Authors, Toastmasters, the West County Lions Club, and the National Federation for the Blind.

Though Amy no longer teaches in the classroom, she still educates by speaking to groups about the challenges of sight loss with anecdotes of faith and humor. She blogs about her experiences in hopes of bridging gaps between the sighted and the blind. In the rest of her time, she fights to stay on track with her writing, finding time to go to the gym or run outdoors, and bemoaning she is at the beck and call of her bossy cat.

www.AmyBovaird.com