



Palm Springs Copywriter Enjoys Double Rewards in Writing for Good Causes

Long before COVID introduced the world to the perks of working from home, Mary Guinane knew she wasn't made for the office grind. She had worked as a children's librarian and then at a nonprofit organization, but when her children entered school, she wanted to find work that would allow her to spend more time with them.

"I was looking for some flexibility in my work life," Mary says. "I didn't want to be primarily a stay-at-home mom. I thought I would be bored. I was looking for some happy middle ground."

She imagined a situation in which she could arrange her work schedule around the children's needs: work before and after school drop-off, be available in the afternoons and early evenings for coaching, homework, and dinner, then work again after putting her kids to sleep.

Writing appeared to fit the bill, and although she had writing experience from past jobs, she wasn't sure that it would *pay* the bills.

Realizing Her Dream

That's when she stumbled across Peter Bowerman's book *The Well-Fed Writer*, which exploded the myth of the starving writer and convinced her she could earn a good living writing.

Soon afterward, she received a letter from American Writers & Artists Institute (AWAI) that asked, "Can you write a letter like this one?" Knowing she could truthfully reply, "Yes, I can," a light bulb went on in her mind, illuminating the road ahead.

CASE STUDY:

Mary Guinane

"Take on the challenges. I have learned so much by taking on those opportunities. I didn't always nail it. But the feedback taught me a bunch. Embrace the learning process."

MEMBER:

Mary Guinane

LOCATION:

Palm Springs, California

FORMER CAREERS:

Children's librarian, nonprofit work

HOW SHE GOT HER FIRST CLIENT:

An agency in New York responded to her first mailing, resulting in a plum assignment to write for the Ronald McDonald House.

TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:

- *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting* (now *The Accelerated Program for Seven-Figure Copywriting*)
- *The FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp

AWAI's training promised to show her exactly how to make it happen.

"When I learned this was possible, I was super excited," Mary says.

Taking It to the Next Level

Mary first explored writing for businesses without any additional training.

"But a few months of trying to make it only on the general copywriting business available in my small, local market made me take AWAI's letter seriously," she says. "There just wasn't adequate opportunity for me to make enough money from my local businesses."

She enrolled in AWAI's signature offering, *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting* (now *The Accelerated Program for Seven-Figure Copywriting*).

"I was a little unsure about it all," she says. "But it felt like very solid training, like AWAI knew what they were doing."

The training was rigorous — but she relished it and discovered the value of constructive feedback.

"I thought I had aced an assignment, but not so much," she says. "But you take that feedback and learn from it."

Ultimately, Mary concluded that the AWAI system worked for those who worked at it, something she still believes.

Another Giant Leap Forward

Soon she felt she was ready for the challenge of AWAI's *FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp, an annual multiday event where members are encouraged to meet, mingle, and network with each other, their instructors, potential clients, and the many world-famous

copywriters who speak there. Attending proved to be transformative both personally and professionally for Mary.

As an introvert, she had always found it difficult to put herself out into the world. But as she approached the first of the two Bootcamps she attended, she vowed to push herself out of her comfort zone.

"I met people who were already doing what I wanted to do and I learned a ton in just a few days," she says. "I decided my dream could become a reality and that I wanted to specialize in fundraising and market my skills on a national level."

Always Be Marketing

With the lessons from Bootcamp fresh in her mind and her new direction as a nonprofit copywriter, Mary reached out to some potential nonprofit clients. She received a response from an agency in New York whose client was the New York Ronald McDonald House, which resulted in writing several pieces for them — a plum assignment.

"Bootcamp and the course gave me the confidence to reach out to larger organizations and it worked," Mary says.

That first positive experience convinced her that she preferred working through agencies.

"The agency gives you all the resources you need to get the job done," she says. "And once you develop that relationship with the agency, they're more likely to give you more work because they have multiple clients."



Her most important and enduring agency relationship came from a follow-up call with a prospect at RKD Group, a full-service marketing and communications agency working exclusively with nonprofits. He told her he'd just lost a senior writer and asked if she'd be interested in the job.

"If I can do it remotely, I would be," she told him. He agreed to that and she joined RKD as an in-house senior writer. She was later promoted to associate creative director and helped with training and development of new writers.

Today, she is an associate creative director at TrueSense Marketing working on multiple accounts and continues to teach local nonprofits how to craft their messaging to donors.

She also enjoys the flexibility remote work affords, like hopping out for a walk around the block and setting up her space to suit her mood, down to selecting music and candle scents. She travels frequently from her home in Palm Springs and is able to work wherever she goes.

"Last year I don't think I spent more than two weeks at home between July and September," she says.

Gratitude and Working for Good

Just as important as the flexibility and income is the knowledge that her work supports causes she is passionate about.

"It's great to know that if you do your job well, people donate to cancer research or to help the homeless. Or you're supporting organizations who are saving animals, or helping veterans suffering from PTSD," she says. "I can sleep well at night, knowing I get to play a small role in good things happening in the world."

Even with all her success, Mary sometimes finds herself doubting her ability. In those times, she refers to the advice she gives to new writers.

"Take on the challenges. I have learned so much by taking on those opportunities," she says. "I didn't always nail it. But the feedback taught me a bunch. Embrace the learning process."

And she counsels gratitude, always.

"I've happily passed on tips and advice, just to pay it forward. People were very kind to me," she says. "That's something we can forget pretty easily when we're trudging through things solo. I think keeping AWAI in your world makes you feel less alone while you do this."

Mary's Tips for Copywriters

- **Never give up. Self-doubt is normal** — Just start by putting things down on the page.
- **Show up, do your best work, and be professional** — People really do appreciate that.
- **If you have not already started to explore AI, start** — AI is not going to replace human writers. But humans plus AI will replace writers who don't use it.

Ready to pursue *the writer's life*?

Learn more about the program that helped launch Mary's career,
The Accelerated Program for Seven-Figure Copywriting.

