

Symbols of Hope

By Gail Wood

Pondering *The New Colossus* by poet Emma Lazarus

Etched upon the base of the Statue of Liberty

Welcoming those who have come to make this country their new home,

I reflect upon how these words relate to my teaching career:

*“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

Teachers too have open doors...

And open arms...

And open hearts...

Greeting each child and assessing where they will begin.

Imparting needed skills with encouragement

Calming fears and furnishing the tools required

To survive and thrive in this new land.

Some arrivals excel at Math or Science

Others achieve heights in Art and Music

World Language and ELL classrooms places to gain acceptance,

While English and History classes present challenges.

The teacher is their beacon of light, their lamp of learning,

The purveyor of their knowledge, the supporter of their dreams

The classroom a safe haven where all becomes possible.