Sharene and Tyrise Blog Story (Draft)

Working Title: Bonded by Bookshare, A Mother and Daughter Story

OR:

Mother and Daughter Bond Over Bookshare and Unlock Reading Success

Quote from Sharene:

“We live with learning differences, but that doesn’t define who we are as people.” – Sharene N.

*Bookshare brings people from all backgrounds together through technology that makes reading easier. There are no limits when it comes to the impact that Bookshare has on people’s day-to-day lives. The same rings true for a mother and daughter, Sharene and Tyrise, from Detroit, Michigan, whose relationship was strengthened through their use of Bookshare, an online library of accessible ebooks for people with reading barriers.*

Undiagnosed Dyslexia Led to Learning Struggles for Sharene

Sharene, an employee in the Detroit Public School Community District, is no stranger to finding new and innovative ways to learn due to her experience with dyslexia. Sharene recalls many joys and adventures growing up in Detroit, but an eagerness to learn was not always a part of her educational experience. Reading out loud and participating in class left her feeling uncomfortable. As a result, Sharene barely graduated from high school. It wasn’t until she started college at Wayne State University that her learning challenges would be addressed. Through her struggle to comprehend reading assignments, lectures, and class discussions, a colleague suggested that she get tested for dyslexia.

After a doctor diagnosed Sharene with dyslexia, she encountered several mentors and new learning strategies. Sharene met Nancy Brown, a Detroit-based Outreach Coordinator for Benetech, the parent company of Bookshare. Nancy’s outreach focuses on providing better learning experiences to increase equity in education. Nancy introduced Sharene to Bookshare and explained how to use it to read books. This introduction changed Sharene’s life, and she often refers to Nancy as her saving grace.

“I downloaded a book, and I understood it. I like soft male voices. It catches my attention and brings the book alive – hearing the words. I can see the words come off the page. I’m experiencing what is being said,” says Sharene. Since being introduced to Bookshare, Sharene has discovered author Joyce Myers, and one of her favorite books is *Homemade Love* by J. California Cooper. With Sharene’s newfound love of books through Bookshare, she’s gained the confidence to go back to school. She is completing her bachelor’s degree in Human Resources, and now her master’s degree in education, in which she happily participates in class discussions.

**Mom Sharene and Daughter Tyrise Bond Over Bookshare**

Although Sharene has her own personal journey with Bookshare, it wasn’t until she became more engaged with the ebook library that she discovered that her daughter, Tyrise, was using it for her studies at the Detroit School of the Arts.

Tyrise has autism and other learning challenges. This diagnosis changed Sharene’s mindset, and she needed to find a better way to communicate with her daughter and help with her education. Tyrise didn’t become verbal until age four, and she often uses drawing to express herself, which has led to her career path of art and design.

Before Bookshare, Tyrise was often frustrated comprehending certain topics, but by using Bookshare with her mother, the learning process is a lot easier for them both. Tyrise also uses YouTube to listen to books read aloud, but she likes Bookshare better because with Bookshare, it’s the real book. Tyrise exclaims, “I’m not a baby. I’m a tenth grader in high school. Bookshare gives me my independence. “

Both Sharene and Tyrise agree that before Bookshare they despised reading. Bookshare has opened the door to make reading and learning fun and engaging. Sharene says, “With Bookshare, Tyrise can follow along. It highlights the words as they are read out loud. For example, the word ’relationship’. Tyrise can take that word and say, ’I want to learn more about it.’ So, she’s building her vocabulary which increases her communication skills.” Bookshare is giving Tyrise tools to express herself in an effective way. Sharene states, “It takes a village, and everyone in this village needs to be on the same page as Tyrise, the matriarch of the village, to support her through her experiences.” This further emphasizes the love and dedication Sharene has for her daughter and their journey together on the educational path.

On Bookshare, Tyrise loves to read comic books and the Percy Jackson series, and she and Sharene enjoy discussing the stories. Tyrise teaches Sharene how to use the various features of Bookshare. “She’s my little computer person. She knows how to do everything on her phone. She helps me. Click, click click, and it’s done. She’s my all in all,” says Sharene.

Bookshare continues to serve as the communication tool for the pair to learn and develop together.

**What the Future Holds for Sharene and Tyrise**

Sharene has taken her efforts further to raise awareness about Bookshare to her own school district. Each month there’s a parent meeting for the students in the gifted and talented program, and Sharene emphasizes that Bookshare can be used not only by children but also by their parents as a tool of connection and communication through learning. Parents are more likely to feel comfortable helping their children with their reading assignments because of the features Bookshare offers.

Tyrise’s artwork has earned her an internship at a local tattoo shop where she draws designs on transfer paper. Tyrise’s following has become so large that people are finding her on social media and asking her to draw tattoos for them.

Sharene and Tyrise continue to break barriers as they overcome their adversities in education and serve as an inspiration for others in the Detroit area. Thank you, Sharene and Tyrise, for sharing your beautiful story.

CTA? What action do you want readers to take? Learn more about…

Add Bookshare boilerplate here so readers know who qualifies, what it contains, what it costs, and how to get more info