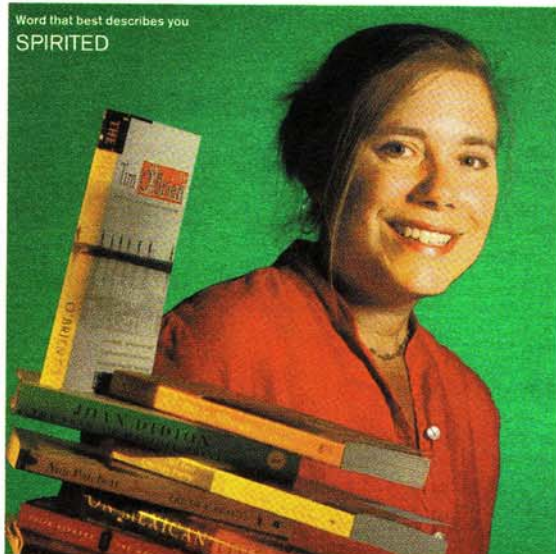


# DRUTH DICKEY

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**  
New Futures

These books are part of Ruth's collection that consists of "four wall-to-ceiling bookcases, after whittling them down." She

says she has always loved reading, writing and poetry: "There is something magic and powerful about people telling their stories."



As the daughter of two teachers, Ruth Dickey learned at an early age to at least appreciate the Three Rs.

"I've always loved reading and writing," she says. "My dad is a math teacher, so no comment on the third R."

Still, arithmetic plays a big role in her day job — she runs New Futures, a Burien non-profit organization that assists children and families in low-income housing complexes. But that's only after rising early to write poems and essays — and drink lots of coffee.

"I try to write every day in the morning before I go to work," she says.

Four years ago, Dickey's passion for writing inspired her to put her career in the non-profit world on hold and earn a master's of fine arts in poetry from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dickey's poems have appeared in several literary publications. A chapbook, "Paper Houses, Sky Ceilings," is due out soon. The title of each poem in the chapbook is a line or a fragment written by one of the homeless or formerly homeless writers she once worked with in a writing group she founded.

As a poet, Dickey strives to "take ordinary things and find the exceptional in them." Another common theme in her poetry also drives her career — "building supportive and inclusive communities." That's why Dickey drove all the way across the country to the Seattle area in 2004 to become executive director at New Futures.

"I really fell in love with the program because it's so smart to bring services to where people live," says Dickey, 35.

As much as Dickey loves her job, it's not what she had in mind when she left her hometown of Clemmons, N.C., to study at Georgetown University. "I thought I wanted to be in the foreign service," she says. That explains her degrees — a bachelor's in humanities in international affairs and a master's in Latin American studies.

By the time she left Georgetown, Dickey had concluded that international development work would satisfy her more than the foreign service. As a first step, she joined VISTA, a branch of the AmeriCorps program. At VISTA, she worked with homeless people — and experienced a second change of heart.

"I just got connected and stayed (in the United States) rather than heading abroad. Things move in interesting ways in life, no?"

**HOMETOWN:** Clemmons, N.C.

**BOOK ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND:**

"My Alexandria" by Mark Doty and "The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle" by Haruki Murakami

**MOST EMBARRASSING CD YOU**

**OWN:** I'm a sucker for movie soundtracks

**GUILTY PLEASURE:** "Project

Runway," soy mochas and reading The New Yorker in one glorious, uninterrupted evening

**PROFESSION OTHER THAN YOUR**

**OWN YOU'D LIKE TO TRY:** Shark researcher, detective or novelist

**IF YOUR LIFE WERE A MOVIE, IT**

**WOULD BE CALLED:** "Coffee Break"

**WHO WOULD PLAY YOU:** Reese

Witherspoon

**LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP**

— BRAD BROBERG