

BIOGRAPHY

Sandra Johnson & Sammie Johnson

Sandra and Sammie Johnson are twins. They grew up in Washington, D.C., where they attended public schools. Sandra is shy and Sammie is gregarious, but they both had a big secret that they hid from everyone, including each other. They both had difficulties reading. Sandra dropped out of high school at 16. Sammie graduated from high school. Sandra could memorize words quite successfully, but she could not read any unfamiliar words. For example, she could easily read the word job, but had no idea how to read the word job. Sammie was able to guess his way through some texts, and use his gregarious personality to find ways to get through school. But both carried the shame of being poor readers into their 30s. Sandra enrolled in an adult literacy program and, after having 3 tutors stop teaching her, finally found a tutor that taught her to read. She has now graduated from high school and even taken college classes. When Sandra started to learn to read, she told Sammie about the adult literacy program she was attending. Sammie shared that he needed help with reading, and Sandra encouraged him to get a tutor. Now they are both avid readers and have attained careers that would have been impossible if they hadn't learned to read. Sandra and Sammie speak nationally to teachers, parents, and students, explaining their struggles growing up as struggling readers, how they learned to read, and how life is so much better as a reader.

