

Visions

Essays by New Adult Readers and Speakers of English as a Second Language
September 2010



HILLSBOROUGH
LITERACY COUNCIL

Teaching Adults to Read and to Speak English

Welcome



From HLC's President

We are living in a time when everything seems more difficult than before. Getting through the day is harder and takes more time; not only because of the things that are

happening to us personally, but also because of the growing pains the world seems to be having at the moment. Yet; there are people reaching out and asking for help, and people answering that request with time, patience and good will. Taking on the task of learning to read as an adult is very brave. Teaching adults to read is also brave and when tutors and students commit to one another that they will face this challenge together it paves the way for the world to grow in the right direction. We are so proud of each and every student that works with our program, and we are so thankful for the tireless loyalty our tutors have for their students. Each year our Assembly helps everyone share the success the year has brought. Each year I attend the Assembly I realize what a privilege it is to be part of the HLC and be included in this celebration.

In closing I would like to suggest that times will improve. If you ask for proof, one thing I would quickly say is; the HLC continues to make a difference and that matters. It's important.

Richard Zingale
President, Hillsborough Literacy Council



From the Library Director

Perseverance is required to reach life-changing goals. Accomplishing these goals requires a steady persistence, even

under the most difficult and trying circumstances. Whether the goals are set by Basic Literacy or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students, in a tutoring relationship, both student and tutor must commit to hard work. So, it is with sincere appreciation that I applaud the students who have contributed the inspiring and deeply personal stories to this year's edition of Visions and the tutors who encouraged their participation.

At a time when people are struggling to find ways just to make ends meet, I am truly encouraged by the dedication of both students and tutors and the Board of Directors of the Hillsborough Literacy Council. I extend my sincerest thanks to all who work so hard to carry out the important mission of the Hillsborough Literacy Council on a daily basis and my sincerest congratulations to all of this year's student contributors.

Joe Stines, Director of Libraries
Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library

The Hillsborough Literacy Council

The Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) is a nonprofit affiliate of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Libraries teaching functionally and marginally illiterate adults to read and write through its Adult Basic Literacy program. In its English for Speakers of Other Languages program, participants learn to read, write and communicate in English.

HLC accepts adults 18 and over into its program. Depending upon the student's level, learning to read can take a year or longer.

HLC needs volunteer tutors and funding partners. Tutors receive training and materials and are asked to commit to one year working with their student(s).

HLC memberships directly support the program by funding materials and other supplies.

For more information, please contact us at: 813-273-3650 or you can also visit our website: hillsboroughliteracy.org

In order to celebrate our students' learning stages, we have not edited their essays.

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Essays

What Education Means to Me

Submitted by: Luz Aristizabal
Tutor: Name

"Education makes people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave."

(Henry Peter Brougham)

I agree with this quote since knowledge gives one the power to avoid things that cause harm.

On the other hand, ignorance can enslave one. John Dewey said, "Education is a social process...education is growth...education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself." Webster's definition of education is; "knowledge or skill obtained or developed by such a process."

In my opinion, education is learning; it is developing knowledge and knowledge is power. It gives one credibility, respect, and appreciation when knowledge is demonstrated. A practical consideration is that the more one learns the greater will be opportunities for employment.

There are different conduits of learning. Whenever one is alert and observant, one is learning. Most learning comes about through our senses of taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing. However, education allows one to explore beyond the senses.

For example, Nostradamus had the ability to predict events based on his dreams. Most scientists agree that certain people have a natural ability for pre-cognitive dreams.

The twentieth century witnessed the rise of Parapsychology, which set out to prove the reality of "extrasensory perception (ESP). J.B.Rhine of Duke University was responsible for this term. His research included telepathy, clairvoyance, intuition, long distance perception and other modalities of Parapsychology.

It is also important to consider the influence of learned scholars in the educational field. "The Father of American Education", Horace Mann, wanted a school that would be available and equal for all, part of the birthright of every American child, available for rich and poor alike.

For John Dewey, learning was active and school was unnecessarily long and restrictive. His idea was that children came to school to do things and live in a community that gave them guided experiences. That enabled the students to contribute to society.

Another shining star is Maria Montessori, who developed a system of education for children of from three to six years of age, utilizing equipment and activities that allowed for freedom and individual pacing of learning. Her principles of learning are also applicable for adults.

Continuing education keeps one updated. It will help one to apply knowledge to the current situation. When somebody is educated, he or she is a cultivated person as well. Interaction with others enriches one with knowledge and wisdom. The more one knows, the more humble one becomes because it is realized that there is still a lot to learn and understand.

For those, like me, who love education, this process lasts for a lifetime.

How Wonderful God's Love Is

Submitted by: Anonymous
Tutor: Juliet Douglas

How wonderful to know that He who watches from above, He will always keep us sheltered in His ever-present love.

In the midst of all this I remembered stormy times in my life when it seemed I was on a conveyer belt: a victim of forces beyond my control, car wash experiences I now call them. I remembered that whenever I passed through deep waters

my Redeemer had been with me, sheltering me against the rising tide.

When I came out on the other side, which I always did, I was able to say with joy and confidence – He is a faithful God!

My Dad

Submitted by: Joe Andrews
Tutor: Carol Bockenek

When I was young, my Dad used to come and pick us up in his raggedy camper. He would take us on a road trip from New York City down to South of the Border, stopping in Delaware, Baltimore, Virginia and everywhere in between. We were visiting family all the way down.

On the way back we would stay in camp grounds. My dad was a camping guy. We would fish and eat what we caught. We would cook s'mores over the campfire, tell ghost stories, go canoeing and ride on the bikes we had tied on the back of the camper.

We went every summer for two weeks at a time. I liked spending time with my dad and brother. Every summer I would be looking out the window for him. Then we would go pick up my little brother and head out. I miss those times.

My Vacation

Submitted by: Charles Hamilton
Tutor: Diane Grey

My name is Charles Hamilton and I am going on vacation for five days. While I am there I will see family and friends. We will party and drink Heinekens and then will go to church on Sunday.

Some people played dominoes and poker. We all ate a lot of food. We had a lot of fun.

Disappointment Come to America

Submitted by: Anonymous

The story began when I was 12 years old. I came from a highly recognized family. At the time our house was the largest, most prestine house of all Silwad, Palestine (my home). The entirty of my family had citizenships and to have citizenship was like having the last King's crown. My grandfather was the leader of our tribe up until he died. I was born a year later. My father later took on the position taking care of everybody in the city from the poor and needy to the unjustified. He was a noble, generous man and was known for it. Where I'm from people thought if you came from a great line you were bound to be great. Sooner or later my aunt begins to take notice that many people were coming to ask for her beautiful neices, but she wanted us for her grandchildren. So she persisted for years in asking for our hand. One day my dad agreed. The next day my dad came to me and my sister and asked us if we wanted our second cousins. We said if you think they are good, okay. Afew months later my uncle from America came to take me and my sister back to the land of promise to arrange our weddings and start a new life. My dream was to finish school and have a college degree, a nice home with 6 children 2 girls 4 boys, and live happily ever after with my husband. That is why I said yes to my second cousins. I mean who could resist college graduates and a garuntee to a bright future or at least thats what my aunt told me.

When I arrived to America and saw the man I was to marry I was pleased with him and him with me. Soon after my future mother-in-law and I went dress shopping. She took me and my sister to a rental store and I despised it and the dresses. However She said we had no choice in the matter. That is when I knew something was wrong. It made me So

mad and sad that I became depressed and in America there was no one to turn to not even my parents who were still stuck overseas for the next 4 years.

The day of the wedding came, but not much went the way I wanted. At least I was happy enough to smile. The problem that came with my new family was my mother-in-law and her daughters. I had to keep reminding myself that I was happy with my husband. I think my mother-in-law was either just plain evil or having a tuff time letting go of her son. I go with the first one. She lives with us for crying out loud! everything I do she has to say something, complain, or argue about it. She made a problem out of everything. I could tell my dreams were being flushed down the drain especially after I began to work with my husband in the store and got pregnant. I started to miss my family and question how I left them a wonderful caring family for these mostrosties. They didn't love me! They hated me. Every night I would cry of course with out my husband knowing because I love him and didn't want him to feel hurt. I had to do something. So I decided to write aletter to my father to let it all out and relive myself of the burden of keeping it in.

In the letter I wrote of how I was dissappointed and let down about this new life. That it was nothing what I expected. I had expected to go to school and come to another loving and understanding family, and lastly how this letter was the first and the last time I would write something like it. I never knew if it ever reached him. A year later god blessed me with a baby boy. My husband and I were so happy. I still have those problems, but life goes on. My faimly grew bigger and bigger. Now I have 5 kids 2girls and 3 boys and finally live with a family that loves me with out my mother-in law. At least my dream partly came true. But sometimes you just have to except what life throws at you.

My Sweet Country, Haiti

Submitted by: Wilnie Montrout

Tutor: Jessie Bush

Dear Friend,

What happened in my country in January changed my life in a big way. It gave me another way to LOOK at life. That means not to take anything for granted, because every opportunity God gives you should be special. Just to wake up in the morning should be enough to satisfy me, but that is never enough. What happened taught me to stop looking for things to thank God for or to be happy. Just wake up and thank God for the day. Also, I have a lot of family, aunt and cousin, that I didn't have any contact with. What happened taught me life is too short, so I have another chance to make it right with my loved ones. When I found their phone numbers and called them, it was very special for me. All the guilt that I have been having for not knowing if anything happened to them is gone. It was all LOVE and excitement.

First Step, Learning English!!

Submitted by:

María Cristina Rincón Pérez

Tutor: Elaine Roach

I came to this country 2 years ago, I had some knowledge on English but it was very basic, I thought it was going to be easy for me to speak the language, but the reality was different, I was speaking and understanding very little, as the months passed I was really concerned that this task every time was further away for me to complete.

Going out was a nightmare, asking for directions, in a restaurant, everything was so difficult, I always had to relay on my husband to talk for me, I was so embarrassed I was not able to ask things for myself, those situations gave me the strength to continue with my education.

Essays

I started taking some classes in different places, I had very good teachers and I did my homework at home, reading and studying, every day was an easier one, I went through grammar and conversational classes.

I went to the Library in Town and Country and found out about some classes and a tutor program, I signed up for both, The classes were really good, we had people to talk to for an hour, that was really important, we talked about everything, the weather, our home countries, but we always ended up talking about food, that was so funny and the most important thing was that we talked for an hour with a person that was able to correct us and make us a better speakers. I met people from all over the world, that is an experience I will never forget.

With the tutor I had the best experience, she was the kindest person I have ever known, we had a meeting every week and we talked about different topics, my experience learning this language has thought me that you need to be very careful and ask for everything, no matter what, she was very patient with me, she corrected me those mistakes that nobody was going to do, she had some materials that are those little details that nobody was going to teach you, and we talk and talk for hours every week, I have homework every week, essays, pages for complete and so many different things to do. I had so many different questions about this country, about the surroundings, the neighborhood, about the church, she gave me that guidance and that is very important for me, knowing that I have someone to trust and to ask.

The space in the library was always clean, the people that work there is so nice, they were always willing to help us, I would recommend for anyone who needs and wants to learn English to go ahead and ask, go to the library and sign up for this program, you are going to be as lucky as I was with my tutor.

Thank you for this program and for helping us in this process, you do not know how much I appreciate the opportunity to learn and to know such a kind person.

Proud of Her

Submitted by: Marie Ipote
Tutor: Marjorie Nesman

My mother is very unique and special woman. She is full of love and courage. We are a family of 5 children. We all grown people now. Our father left the house when we were still little to go live with another woman leaving mom alone with us. She was a single mom, working hard to take care of us. She was selling oranges, corns and vegetables on the street just to be able to pay the bills and to feed us. When one of us was sick, because she could not afford to go to the hospital, she was treating us with some herbal mixtures. It was nasty but it worked fine. Now I am in Usa and she is still back home in Africa taking care of my sisters and brothers. I send her some money from time to time To help her out. I love her so much and I will do anything just to make her smile.

Fragments of My Life in America

Submitted by: Myriam Marceles
Tutor: Sr. Marcella Kiesel

I came from Columbia eight years ago. I left part of my heart there because I still have some family there.

My daughter lives in Tampa and has two girls who need me. I know how important it is to learn English. My granddaughters aged 24 and 16 speak good English. They came here when the youngest was eight. Their mother does not speak English as well as the children.

I met Sr. Marcella through the Hillsborough Literacy Council. She has the patience of Job. I am mumbling and stammering my new vocabulary. I can

read a little and understand some of what I read. Even though I am an old woman, I am determined to continue to learn to speak, read and write English. The lessons and knowledge that my tutor transmits to us with patience and creativity helps me to want to return for the next class.

I do Arts and Crafts twice a week with a group of women. They are surprised that I am able to communicate with them in English now. My secret is that I attend ESOL classes twice a week!

My Daughter's Retirement

Submitted by: Isabel Acosta
Tutor: Sr. Marcella Kiesel

When I brought my children to this country in 1969, I never dreamt how far they would come in life. All received college educations but I'm especially proud of the accomplishments of my third daughter, Priscilla.

Priscilla started to learn English in Grade School in N.Y.C. Then she became more fluent at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Middle School. She excelled at Mother Cabrini High School as an honor student.

She surprised us when she joined the Navy. This career lasted thirty years.

A great retirement celebration was held in her honor on June 4, 2010. The ceremony was very moving and brought tears to everyone's eyes, especially my family and me. The Naval officer awarded her a special merit medal which she added to her many other medals.

Priscilla wrote a beautiful poem about her experience of becoming an American citizen.

She received many gifts and we took many pictures. The next evening we had a big party with the 70s as the theme. We dressed like the 70s. We danced like the 70s. It was great fun!

All of the family were very proud of her achievements, especially that

she reached the rank of Lieutenant Commander. However, no one was prouder than her mother was.

Looking for New Horizons

Submitted by: Esther Duran
Tutor: Sr. Marcella Kiesel

I was born in Quantanamo, Cuba. When the government took our property, we moved to another province. My father died soon after, leaving my mother to raise five children; two sons and three daughters.

I graduated from High School in Havana. Then I got a job as a Secretary in Middle School.

After twelve years of married life, we divorced and I raised my two daughters, Edisleydis and Elizabeth. After seven years, a wonderful thing happened. I won the lottery which gave me the freedom to leave Cuba for new horizons.

Now I am in the United States for seven years. I received a certificate to practice as a Certified Nursing Assistant. It is important that I learn to speak English.

The Hillsborough Literacy Council is my path to learning English. I attend classes twice a week at Rocky Creek Village, where I live. My tutor is a good teacher and encourages me to continue even when I get impatient with the difficult pronunciation. My classmates are very supportive too. I feel that this is a new horizon for me and it makes me glad.

A Tranquil Life

Submitted by: Gladys Herrera
Tutor: Sr. Marcella Kiesel

My name is Gladys but my family and my friends call me Galita.

I was born in Loja Province in Equador. I have two sisters and one brother. My father is 92 and my mother is 82 years old and they are both in good health. They are the best parents in the whole world.

My childhood was very happy and tranquil. I studied at a Marionite Elementary and High School. Then I graduated from Vincent strong rock University.

My first job was teaching children in Elementary School. I worked in Equador for twenty seven years as a teacher. For ten years I was a principal at St. Paul College.

In 1976 I married Jorge Herrera who I met in College. Our daughter was a big gift from God. She is now thirty years old and still lives in Equador.

I came to visit the United States and lived in Miami. I soon discovered that it was not as tranquil here. One year later, we moved to Tampa. I worked for six years at Town and Country Hospital.

Then I was diagnosed with Stomach Cancer and had to have surgery. I was glad to be here because in Equador there was no insurance. Now I am getting well and am ready to travel back to Equador to visit my daughter. When I return to Tama, I will bring some tranquility home with me.

No Title

Submitted by: Jesus Omana
Tutor: Phil Pierre-Saint

My name is Jesus and I have ten years in U.S I came from mexico I have a wire and 2 children I become a christian 3 years ago and now attend Bell Shoals Baptist church in Brandon

Im so happy to live in america because I have freedom to do what I want, there is better education For my children and more opportunity to work

No Title

Submitted by: Rocío Omana
Tutor: Phil Pierre-Saint

My name is Rocío I came from Mexico. I Have lived 6 years in Brandon. Im married and I have two sons. The older son

born in Mexico and the youngest born in Tampa I think that USA is a great blessing for my life because in this country I know that Jesus save me and my kids can grow in a cristian home. I know they love Jesus In this country we found many people very helpful to making us feel welcome We attended Bell Shoals Baptist Church and there we took a class called English as second language.

No Title

Submitted by: Lilian Caiced
Tutor: Megan Jackson

Hay, my name is Lilian Caiced. I am Cristian for 4 years. I was born in Colombia and I have 18 years in this country. I'm living with my daughter Nicole. She have 15 years old in Sept. 9. My profession is hairdresser, I'm working for big company, I love my Job, I'm so happy because God is blessing me because I have the opportunity to know many people, Thank my customer Told me about The inglish class In The Bell Shoals Baptist Church, This is a big opportunity for me. Thank you God. and Thank you To The Teachers Mrs. Mary and Miss Megan. for help my with my English.

Thank You Jehovah Because You Saved My Sister's Life

Submitted by: Sonia Gonzalez
Tutor: Martha Clark

I have to thank God because he saved my sister Maria's life when she almost died from open heart surgery two weeks ago. God made the things that sometime look impossible, possible. When my sister went to the hospital, she thought every thing would be OK, she was very optimistic. After she was recovering from the surgery she had complications. The doctors told the family that she could die and hold God can save her life. We started to pray for her life and Jehovah gave her another opportunity. Now we know that Jehovah has a purpose with her life.



HILLSBOROUGH LITERACY COUNCIL

Teaching Adults to Read and to Speak English

Acknowledgements

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