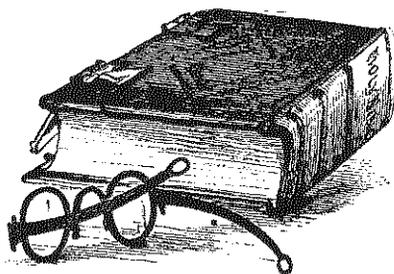


Visions

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*A Collection of Thoughts
from New Authors...*



*Authors in Residence Contest
Volume IV
1996*

GTE Corporation
Sponsor 1996

*Hillsborough Literacy Council, Inc.
Tampa, Florida*

*"...but if a man happens to find himself
he has a mansion which he can inhabit
with dignity all the days of his life..."*

James Michener

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Forward

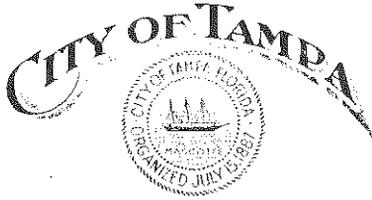
*I*f books could talk...this one would shout. If you listen you will hear it. You will not need ears to hear it; you will hear it with your heart.

What will it be saying? Many things. All of them personal, all of them real, all of them proud. Do not look for this in the words in the stories alone, look for this between the lines. Look for what the book is saying about hard work, about dedication, about determination, about accomplishment.

Listen to this voice. It beckons us to take a path sometimes strange, or unfriendly and difficult, and we want to resist. That which we fear holds us back. Remove that fear and the road ahead looks more promising.

These authors have taken that road. Their tutors have taken it with them. They have learned from each other and the world has become a better place for everyone.

Gloria Abrams
Tampa, Florida
September 1996



DICK A. GRECO
MAYOR

September 1996

After reading "Visions", I came to realize how many small miracles there are all around us. The work of these new authors, their courage and determination to improve their skills, the dedication of their tutors, who volunteer their time, unselfishly, to help shape a better future for their neighbors; these are the miracles which are sometimes hidden from us.

Citizens helping citizens is the sine qua non of the health and vitality of a city. I am proud and grateful that we have, in Tampa, an organization like the Hillsborough Literacy Council. This association's determination to create a pathway of self-help for people whose skills have yet to be discovered and nurtured, is an invaluable asset to this community.

Congratulations, new readers! You were called upon to rise, and there is no limit to how high you may go.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dick A. Greco", is written over a light-colored background.

Dick A. Greco
Mayor

Joe R. Stines
Director of Libraries



(813) 273-3652
Fax: 273-3707
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Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System

900 N. Ashley Drive, Tampa, Florida 33602

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In his popular song "Autograph," John Denver once touched upon the need for every human being to share his or her thoughts, feelings, hopes and dreams with others. He sang: "This is my autograph--here in the songs that I sing--here in my cry, in my laugh--here in the love that I bring--to be always with you--and you always with me."

It is in this spirit, that the Literacy Council not only teaches people to read but also encourages them to communicate and share themselves with others through the written word. Recognizing that reading is only a first step, they continue the education process by fostering creative self-expression.

The Council does this each year by holding a writing contest. Students are encouraged to participate; prizes are awarded and the entries are published in an attractive booklet. It is the Literacy Council's way of honoring those students who have worked long and hard to learn to read and express themselves on paper.

I hope you will enjoy these compositions as much as I have. You will share with the authors the laughter, the tears, the trials and triumphs which are part of our human existence. As you read these compositions, you, too, will be a part of the victory which has made this booklet possible. To the Literacy Council and the authors represented here, let me extend a very deserved "Well Done!"

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe Stines".

Joe Stines, Director
Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library

A graduate new reader speaks out....

My Story

by Naomi Perry

This is my story that I want to write.

I started this program 7 1/2 years ago. I'm learning how to read. This program made me advance in a lot of things I like to do.

I want to get my GED one day. By learning how to read it has expanded my knowledge. I read books and the newspaper. I keep up with current events. I read about far-away countries.

I worked on a computer. It helped me a lot to be able to understand typing and work with the Internet, learning the basic skills of computer programming.

I have enjoyed my life more because I understand life more. I thank God for all the people that have helped me get this far. Sometimes I feel like giving up. But then I think of all the people that help me and I feel like going on.

Editor's note:

Ms. Perry has been active with the Council's Student Support Group (RAFT) since its inception in 1993 and also sits on the Board of Directors of the Hillsborough Literacy Council.

Learning

by Shari Crews

*A*bout a year ago I study English in a group class. I quit going because I feel I was not learning anything. Thanks to Gloria she got me in the literacy program. I feel like I am learning what I always wanted to learn...to learn reading and writing.

By the way, I have a good teacher. He does not let me skip one word wrong. I can't wait till the day I can read and write. I want that for a long time. And now I have my opportunity. This is going to help me in my job to be able to write notes to my customers. Now I have a hard time to understand the notes they are writing to me. And when this happens I am going to celebrate! I'll be so happy!

Struggling to Learn

by Leonard Coleman

*I*n life you struggle without an education.
Education means a better life for me and my family.
To learn is to gain knowledge of the world.

When I think about my chance of a lifetime,
I think of things I didn't do in school.
I didn't know the importance of an education
when I was growing up.

At this I'm ashamed of my education.
I am ashamed that I didn't learn to read well in school.

Now I struggle to learn in a class
to gain the things I missed in school.
I'm struggling to make a living for my family today,
because I didn't take school seriously.

But I have gone back to school
to learn the basics of reading and writing skills.
And with God's help I know I'll make it in life.

Seven Mini Autobiographies

by: Araceli Ramirez Rosalba Garcia
Patricia Guillen Maria Calvillo
Margarita Ramirez Maria E. Amezquita
Dora Garza

*M*y name is Araceli Ramirez, I'm from Mexico City. I have been in the United States seven years. I have two children, one boy and one girl. I'm expecting another baby in December. My husband work for Hooter's Restaurant. I go to Family Learning Center to learn to speak English. I want to speak better English to get a good job and also help my children with their homework.

*M*y name is Patricia Guillen, I'm from Mexico. I have been in the United States for five years. I like the United States because there are more jobs here than Mexico. I work in a factory, I package cups and put them in boxes, then I tape the boxes and put the boxes on the conveyor belt. Everyday I start to work at three o'clock until eleven p.m.. Every morning I study at the Family Learning Center. I like to go to study at the center because I want to speak and understand English well.

*M*y name is Margarita Ramirez, I am from Mexico. I have lived in the U.S.A. for eleven years. I'm married to Cesar Ramirez, I have two children. I like U.S.A. because I can have a good future. Now, I study English and in the future. I can try to get my GED. I study English at Family Learning Center and I like this school. My husband is proud of me.

*M*y name is Dora Garza, I am from Mexico. I have been in the United States for six years. I came to the United States, because my father brought me. I didn't want to come, because I thought it was okay in Mexico, but it's different here. In Mexico we need to work just to survive. Here, I have the opportunity to study and work. I started to work in 1990 in a store for 1 year. I realized that it was better to study so I could get a better job. Now I study in the mornings and I work in the afternoons.

*M*y name is Rosalba Garcia, I am from Mexico. I have lived in the United States for two years. I like living in the United States because it is quiet. I don't like the hot weather. I want to go back to Mexico to visit my family. I have been coming to the Family Learning Center for one year. I have learned to read English and speak more English, I have learned to write and read better in English. Maggie has helped me to sound the letter and words. I can read small books in English. Maggie has helped me to make all types of sentences. Thank you Maggie for helping me. I am thankful for you helping me.

*M*y name is Maria Calvillo, I am from SanJaun de Llanos C.T.O. Mexico. I came to the U.S.A. when I was eighteen. I have lived in the U.S.A. for nineteen years, I like it because there are more opportunities for the people who want to learn English. When I came to United States I did not know how to speak, write nor read English and didn't even know my date of birth in English or Spanish. When I was six years old my mother died and nobody took me to school so I forgot everything I knew. I realized that it was hard to live without knowing my date of birth, my husband told me when I was born because he knew a little bit of English and I always had a thought in my mind to learn English, but it was too hard because my husband and I would work every day in the camps so we could buy a house to live in. I want you to know that is never too late to go to school and graduate. I thank my teachers Margie and Maggie for everything they have done to help me get to this point.

*M*y name is Maria E. Amezcuita, I am from Mexico. I have been in the U.S.A. for 4 years. I like this country because here I have the opportunity to study. My dream is to learn English and in the future I can go to vocational school. Now, I feel that I am ready to take my GED Test and pass. Maggie is my teacher, she has helped me with my English and I've helped her with Spanish. I see my dream coming true.

Growing Up

by Mattie McCray

As a girl growing up, there was not a man in our home. My mother was a hard working woman.

My mother had six children, three girls, and three boys. My mother had to yell a lot.

My mother didn't have a lot to give her six children. We only had apples, and eggs once in a while. I don't think I ever saw an olive when I was a child.

There were'd any money to shop with in our house, a quarter went a long way.

My things were kept in a box. If the zipper was broken in my brothers pants, the zipper had to be replaced with a pin. There were't a dish for everyone to eat out of. Some of us had to eat in a pan. There were't any cups at all.

My two sisters were older than me, and I had one brother older than I was, and I had two brothers younger than I was.

Most of the time I played with my two younger brothers. I played boy games. My two younger brothers never wanted to play girl games. It was all ways two to one.

We went fishing, bird watching, running, jumping, kicking, beating on pans for drums, our legs, arms, hands, and bodies were so tired at the end of the day.

A Dream That Came True

by Iwona Lizurej

It was a beautiful summer day. The sky was warm and clear. On this day, my dream came true. After five long years, I finally had the chance to go home to Poland and see my family. I can't describe the way I was feeling. During all these years residing in the U.S.A., almost every night before I went to bed I imagined the day when I will go home to see my mom, dad, brother, my friends, and everything that was special and dear to me. I remember all kinds of smells from freshly baked cakes made by my mother to the smell of burned leaves in autumn to the smell of wheat and oats fields. I will keep these memories in my heart wherever I go.

My plane landed in Warsaw. I walked through the crowd at the airport as I looked and looked for my parents. Finally, I saw them standing with my nephew, who is very dear to me. Even from a distance, I could see their eyes were filled with tears. Tears ran down my cheeks too. It was a very emotional moment.

After we hugged and kissed we drove to my hometown. It takes four hours from Warsaw to my parents' home. During the way we talked, we looked at each other. I held my mom's hands, they were so warm and so near. Some people may think that I am too sentimental about my parents and my country, but how could I not love and miss the people who gave my life, love, and nourishment? They taught me values and to respect everybody. I'm so grateful for having such wonderful parents.

While we were on the way home, I was looking around me admiring the beautiful Polish landscape. I come from the region in Poland named Warmia and Mazury. This is one of the areas with the most beautiful scenery in Poland. There are two elements that separate this place from other parts of the country. The first of these is nature, with its flora and landscapes. The second is architecture, and this includes not only churches, palaces, monasteries, but also scattered villages, windmills, watermills, farms and manor houses. I really missed this wonderful and mysterious atmosphere. When we arrived home, my younger brother was waiting for us. He didn't look like a teenager anymore. He had become a handsome young man. We miss each other very much.

A Dream That (Cont.)

A few days after I was in Poland, we took a trip to one of the most beautiful cities of Poland, Gdansk, at the Baltic Sea. This is an old town with wonderful castles, churches, and other historical monuments. There are a lot of art galleries, sculpting studios, and plenty of small, romantic coffee bars. We had such a great time! We enjoyed every hour we spent together. The days went by so fast, that before I knew it, my visit came to an end. I knew I would be leaving my family and my favorite places soon. I hope that next year I will be able to come back again. However, no matter where I am, my home is always in my heart.

We Love You, Willie Cherry

by Goldie Mingo

*M*y story is about one of my favorite nephews. His name was Willie Cherry, Jr..

Cherry went to Hillsborough High School and graduated in 1985, and he was a member of the Nubian Knights Social Club and Cherry loved little children.

Cherry and I coached little league baseball. It was there we won the little league championship.

Cherry was a good man. He always gave you a smile but I'm sad to say Cherry died on August 17th. He left one daughter and two sons.

The last time I saw Cherry alive was August 10th where we had a picnic and we played horseshoes and cooked barbecue. We had so much fun that day. At the end of the day when he said goodbye, I didn't know that it was bye forever.

There are so many things I can say about Willie Cherry. He just was a good man. The man who shot him did not know how much love he took from my family and me.

We love you Willie Cherry. You will never be forgotten.

An Uneducated Black Woman Speaking

by Sallie Lynn

I am a black woman, an uneducated black woman speaking. Talking about something in my life. Things have not always been good in my life, but I know that it can be better. But sometimes I stop and look back saying to myself, what am I to do and where am I going.

I am just an uneducated black woman speaking out for the world to hear: We are somebody.

We can do more than just having babies, we are working women. Yes, working women. At home and on the job. And I want my life to change and it will.

I have one girl and one boy. I have three grandchildren who I love so much and I want all of them to know that I could learn to read.

An uneducated black woman making a good life for myself--I know that I can make it in the world. But I am just an uneducated black woman speaking. As I get older the more I want to know, where I am going. But I will not stop looking for answers--there has got to be something there that I can hope for. I am going to find it before I die.

I have not said it at all, the black woman speaking. All I do is work hard and get a little pay. What am I to do now? Don't give up, just keep going. You will get there black woman. Just don't you give up, just read, uneducated black woman and you will see where you can go. But the uneducated black woman keeps on thinking, but I can not stop here. I must keep on looking, things are looking better. I am walking three times a week, every day I will do something.

Well, anything can happen to day again but can I take away sadness? Yes, black woman, you can keep on talking. Someone will hear you one day and they must hear what you are saying and when you are talking somebody will listen at what you are saying.

Uneducated black woman speaking. All I do is work hard, sometimes I just want to go away. But going away will not make things get better. I have to do that myself. Uneducated black woman, keep on going. Just don't stop here.

Our Vacation in Mexico

by Maria Isabel Tripp

*M*y husband and I saved money over the past year so we could take a vacation to Mexico and visit my family and friends.

We flew from Tampa to Houston and from there to Mexico city. Flying to Mexico city the plane bounced around a lot which made me very sick to my stomach, so we were very glad when we arrived in Mexico, City.

We had to go through customs check which was not fun because we had to unpack our suitcases for inspection and then pack them again! My friends were there to meet us and gave us a ride to their house, we stayed with them in Mexico city for a week. They showed us many sights such as the Museum, Bacilica, and many other places of interest. We then took an overnight bus to a very beautiful city called Oaxaca. This city has many very beautiful places to see such as the parks, very beautiful churches, shops, and lots of street vendors. We bought many gifts for our family and friends. We also visited the Monte Alban archeology sight.

We stayed at a very nice hotel called the Gala, it was located next to a beautiful park where all of the local people came to sell their hand made articles for all the tourists to buy.

I found it very interesting to be a translator for my husband because he doesn't speak Spanish very well so it was fun to be able to speak English and Spanish using what I have learned in my class with Geri, my teacher.

We then flew to Hautulco on the Pacific coast. Hautulco has very beautiful beaches and resorts. The water was very clear for diving and swimming. The seafood was the best I have ever eaten. We returned after four days to Oaxaca and then back to Mexico city to say goodbye to my friends and return to the United States.

I wish everyone could enjoy a vacation like I did in Mexico.

Autobiography

by Steve Everett

*M*y name is Steve Everett. I was born January 30, 1957 in Plant City. I have one brother and one sister. I live in Seffner, Florida. I went to Jennings Elementary school, an all black school. I did not learn how to read real good. I was pushed through elementary school and the rest of my life I was the same way. When I got to Jr. High School it was the same way. I was a good football player. I played offense and defense. I did no work in school. All I did was played football because I love sports. I never thought one day I would have to read. I played in 7th, 8th, 9th grade and went on to high school. My sophomore year life repeated itself. I made the team and I still got no education. And I just played football. I was a very good football player. And I played my 10th, 11th, and 12th grade years. And I was still pushed through high school. It was real hard for me when I stopped playing football that year. I never learned to read. When I went to college to play football at Oklahoma. When I get to Oklahoma I still cannot read very good so my life was shit. So I came back home and started drinking and drugging. Then I started on crack cocaine. Then I keep doing the same thing over and over I got me a job with my dad on the rail. It was hard work. It was hot I work there for a long time. The pay was no good at the time to me. I made \$4.25 per hour I made the same pay for about 4 years. I was still drinking and drugging and this went on for a long time. I was having a good time I thought. I met this lady and I fell in love with her. And I move in with her. She had 7 kids I lived with her about 5 years. We live in Seffner for years. Then we moved to Clairmel City in a new house. I had found me a good job I was working at CF Inc. I was making good money then. As the years pass by I was doing good. Then I left her for about 4 months then I met Joyce and I started dating for a while. She and I had fun for a long time. And that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Booker

by Booker T. Washington

*M*y name is Booker T. Washington. I was born in Alabama. I had six sisters and two brothers. I had to work. I didn't get much schooling. I decided to go into the program to learn how to read and write better. The program has made it better for me. I feel very good about myself.

Fly-Fishing

by David Terino

*F*ly-fishing is one of my favorite kinds of fishing. One day about twenty years ago I found an old C.B. whip (antenna) and made a rod from it. I'd fly-fish in the Hillsborough River. One day up river I was fishing by some big cypress trees with a popper and caught a nice bass on a C.B. whip fly rod and I have been fly-fishing ever since.

Fishing is like an Art

by David Terino

*P*icture an early morning on the river. As you motor up river you find a quiet little island with a few stumps and lily pads. You quietly drop your electric motor over the side of the boat and motor into the island quietly. Then you cast by the first stump with a Gold Rapala and wait a few seconds and then you twitch the lure. Then a bass boils up and hits it hard. The fish fights very hard, then she tires. She is a nice ten pound bass. Then you turn her loose to fight again another day.

Tampa in the 1930s

by Gloria Roberts

*I*n the 1930s it was bad all over the world. It was the depression. I know about Tampa because it is my home.

People were out of work. No money, no home. Some people killed themselves. They couldn't take it.

We had no electricity no radio and no refrigerator. We had kerosene lamps and an ice box. You got ice to put in the box that would keep your food cold. We slept on the floor. I would put the lamp down on the floor so I could read. I love to read. I learned to read by myself. In that time they could take you out of school to work. Me and my sister would clean houses for people. We would get down on our knees to scrub the floors. We would work all day for 50 cents.

There was 8 children. Me and my sister took care of them. My mother said she was sick all the time.

We washed clothes for people. We would scrub the clothes on a scrub board. Then we would build a fire and put the pot on the fire to boil the clothes. Then we had two tubs to rinse them in. We had to rinse them by hand. It took us all day to do all that work. Then we would fix supper. Sometimes we did not have anything to eat. We cooked on a wood stove. We would go out in the woods and pick berries and oranges to eat. We would find food that people threw away. We would wash it real good and eat. I am thankful I don't have to live that way now. It was hard but we made it. Two of my sisters are nurses now. I didn't get a chance to get back to school but I have done all right. My brothers did good too. They went back to school. We became close to each other in the bad times we had. And it learned us to work at anything we could get. We never had a childhood. We have always been grown up.

Everybody was not that bad off. If they had a job they did not make much but it did not take much to live on back then. If you had \$3.00 you could live for a week. Bread was only a nickel. Milk was a dime. So you can see that it didn't take much to live on. Rent was about \$3.00 a week. But if you didn't have a job it was hard. Now I am trying to go back to school and learn how to spell and do math. It is so important to go to school. You of today have a chance to stay in school.

My Trip to Alaska

by Larry Frederick

On Wednesday July 10, 1996 I flew to Pittsburgh. From there to Seattle Tacoma. From there to Juneau all in one day. Well, it was a great trip. I went to see my brother David. This was my first time to go to Alaska. He has lived in Alaska for twenty years and this was the first chance I had to go. Well, I was very glad to go. My brother took me fishing. We went to Angler's Choice Lodge. We lived there for four nights and five days. I had a very great time. I fished and fished. We trolled for king salmon and we caught pink salmon and king. We also caught halibut. That is a fish too, a very wild looking fish. But it is very good eating. It was a great trip. It was really good to see my brother. It was a long time and he was so happy for me to come. I really enjoyed the time with his family. He has one daughter and two sons. They are really good children. Well. I also saw whales. That is really neat. I told David that I was learning to read. He really thought that was good. My brother knows that I have had a hard time not knowing how to read. My mom is so glad that I have got a teacher that can teach me to read. I have tried before but couldn't find someone to teach me right. Bob has the right plan, it is phonics. Well. I have already enjoyed "Focus on Phonics", Book 3. I have one more book to go - that is book four. Then I will be finished with program. I hope that I will continue to learn to read better than I do now. I would like to thank this program for giving me the chance to learn. I hope this program will help other people to read and to encourage them to learn. Thank you Bob and "Focus on Phonics".

A Girl Leaving Italy

by Annina Morgan

When I was a little girl I was born in Italy in a little town. The name was Mutignano. My family and I were very happy. We had a beautiful farm and we were very happy. One day something happened. My mother got very sick and my father he took her everywhere to make her well. We were so sad about the tragedy going on in our family. He tried so hard to go to different doctors. He went to every town, but she couldn't get well yet. One day, my mother died. She passed away. We were very, very sad we didn't have my mother because we were very young. I was ten years old. My father was left all alone just with five children. He was so sad and unhappy to see us without our mother.

So one day something special happened. My father's brother and his wife came to visit us in Italy and they saw how sad we were and they felt sorry for my father. He was so alone with all the 5 children. My uncle and aunt saw that we were by ourselves so they decided to send for us to go to America so we would be in a better place to help us out. But one thing was wrong with that. My father could come and my sister and I but leaving my three brothers behind because they were older. They had to be under twenty-one to come to the United States. It took four years to come to America from investigating about our family and our life, the red tape. But we came anyhow. My father took his 2 girls and left the boys behind. That was the most wonderful thing my aunt and uncle had done for us. It was nice to be here but it was hard to leave my country not speaking English and leaving my brothers there.

My oldest brother is still in Italy and I have 2 brothers in Canada. I live in Tampa and my sister lives in Pennsylvania. I'm very sorry and sad my father passed away.

One day I studied to become a citizen of the United States. That was the most beautiful thing I had done, but it was sad too because I had to release my citizenship from my country. I still love my country, but most of all I love America.

Acknowledgements

GTE Corporation - Visions Sponsorship - 1996

Judges - Authors in Residence Contest

David Brown, *President Friends of the Library*
Annette DeLisle, *Director of Education, WEDU*

Judy Hill, *Columnist, Tampa Tribune*

Patrice Koerper, *Community Relations,*
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Madeline Rundus, *Public Service Librarian,*
Northwest Regional Library

James Tokley, Sr., *Poet Laureate Tampa*

Dan Valdez, *Director Adult and Community Education*

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Thank you for your part in making a vision, a reality