



HILLSBOROUGH
LITERACY COUNCIL

VISIONS²⁰¹⁷

Stories by New Adult Readers and
English Language Learners

WELCOME



From HLC's President

The United States of America is a country made up of immigrants and their descendants. Florida and the Tampa Bay area have histories full of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity. The ability

to read and the ability to speak English are two skills necessary for adults raised in our communities as well as new arrivals from abroad.

The Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC), with the support of the Tampa-Hillsborough Public Libraries, has a long and storied history of aiding adults who are motivated to improve their reading and/or English speaking skills. In order to integrate and take full advantage of their communities' or new country's many benefits, our students and volunteer tutors spend many long hours working together talking, studying and improving their skills.

Each year our board of directors and library staff labor to provide as many quality learning opportunities as possible for as many students and tutors as possible. Through such activities, we all grow and are better able to contribute to Tampa Bay's welfare.

At our Annual Appreciation Assembly, our board of directors wishes to demonstrate our gratitude to all our volunteer tutors, students, donors and sponsors for all they do to make our journey more enjoyable and fruitful. Thank you for another great year!

Paul V. Suppich
President, Hillsborough Literacy Council



From the Library Director

Literacy is one of the most important gifts that anyone can receive. I would like to thank the Hillsborough Literacy Council

tutors for their dedication and giving spirit. I want to celebrate the bold steps that all of the literacy students have taken to improve their lives!

The ability to read and write at a basic level can be the determining factor in personal success. Today, in the United States one in six adults cannot read or has less than basic reading skills. 63% of these adults are unemployed. Without basic literacy skills, adults find it harder to get a job, take much longer to find a job, and often are forced to take jobs with lower pay. Talent managers for many of America's largest companies now say that low literacy skills are the greatest impediment to developing a successful workforce - even greater than low technology skills.

Improving basic literacy broadens employment potential and opens up a world of education and career development that will lead to personal growth and success, and will contribute to the overall success of the community. I admire the courage shown by adult students and new Americans in recognizing the importance of literacy to their lives and in seeking help with basic written and spoken English. Their efforts are remarkable and their stories here in the pages of Visions are truly inspiring.

Andrew Breidenbaugh
Director of Library Services
Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative

The Hillsborough Literacy Council

The Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) is a nonprofit affiliate of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library 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 basic English.

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

HLC needs volunteer tutors and will provide them training and materials. We ask our tutors to commit to one year's work with their student(s).

HLC seeks funding partners and donations which will directly support the program by providing student materials and supplies for tutor trainings.

For more information, visit hillsboroughliteracy.org or call (813) 273-3650.

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STORIES 2017

The Wailing From My Heart

Submitted by Yuslinda Nehe
Tutor: Janis Smith

A spring appears after waiting in the long winter. A sprout of happiness grew inside my body,

But only a moment then became withered. Please, Hope, would you stay in me?

My precious one, you had come a trice!
I waited so long for you.

Oh, my heart, do not enter the dark night!
Keep the light inside

While spring goes away, tears will never dry.
Miracle, why did you betray me?

Why are you silent and let the doubts linger over me?
Please, Hope, would you stay in me?

My precious one, have peace there.
I'll keep you in my heart with love that never ends.
Let's be patient for the time, till we meet there
Keep the light inside

Go away, go away, go away bitterness!
I will faithfully wait for the new spring to come again.
Please, Hope, would you stay in me?

And keep the light inside.

Marc Anthony Musicians

Submitted by Wilnelia Badillo Hernandez
Tutor: Greg Kiel

Marc Anthony is an American singer, songwriter, actor, record producer and television producer. Also, he is the top selling tropical salsa artist of all time. He is best known for his latin salsa numbers and ballads. He has won numerous awards. For example: Latin Grammy, Billboards and "Premios lo Nuestro". He was born in New York but the parents are from Puerto Rico. He has albums in English and Spanish music. He was married with Dayanara Torres, she was Miss Puerto Rico Universe in 1997. They have two kids, but they divorced. Also, he was married with Jennifer Lopez is an American singer. And they have twins.

After seven years they divorced. But together works in the album in Spanish for Jennifer Lopez. Having a great success in the song in which they sing together. They are actually on a concert tour in different countries. They began in Puerto Rico and also comes to Orlando, Florida in November of this year.



The Young Symphony Venezuelan Orchestra

Submitted by Leonel Mendez
Tutor: Janet Daggs

Forty two years ago it was created, in Venezuela, the Young Symphony Orchestra, by Jose Antonio Abreu (a Venezuelan composer, conductor and pianist). The principal purpose of this creation was to offer the young Venezuelan musicians the opportunity to participate in a symphony orchestra.

The musicians were from different cities and they had to meet at Caracas (the Country's capital) every weekend. I was a founder member in representation of my native city (Trujillo) along with other musicians. I had the big honor to be the first Principal Clarinet. The first concert was in April 30, 1975. In July of the same year we played concerts in different cities of Mexico.

Getting Older

Submitted by Maria Cristina Corona Ortega
Tutor: Lisa Clementi

A few days ago, I was on the phone making calls to inquire about a new apartment. A man I spoke with asked me what age I was. I felt annoyed and told him, "I don't want to say my age ". He told me that he was 62 years old, and he was so happy for that and not all people make it to that age. This conversation left me thinking. I never thought of life this way.

A couple of days later my son, Leon, told me a close friend of his died. He was young and a very good person, so I took a second moment to carefully think about aging.

I am 67 years old. I don't know how much longer I will live. I have some reflections. Life is a line with three parts - Past, Present and Future.

PAST.

I like to think of the past because it has given me experience and learning opportunities. I have thought often about my past mistakes because I always want to do my best. Now I want to think positive things about my past.

I have two wonderful children. They are my pride, they are good people and are good professionals. My daughter, Cristina, is a Medical Doctor of Dermatology and has her Masters



We have memories and all of these make us different people

in Science. My son, Leon, has his PHD from UCLA and they are very good parents. I have three grandchildren and I love them very much.

I had very difficult times, but God gave me strength and took my hand.

PRESENT.

We don't have the present without our past. We have memories and all of these make us different people. We can see life in a better way because we can learn from our mistakes.

The present is really the moment, just this moment when we are better than the past and we have the opportunity to build on the future. How? Working, learning all we can learn, reading, writing, having good friends, walking every day, thinking of God and all his wonderful gifts that he has given us: the sun, the moon, the sky, the trees and so much more.

Today, we can keep and care for our health. It is our responsibility. Many people love me but I don't want to be a burden on them in the future. Another thing in the present and very important is to be happy. We don't know if there will be another tomorrow.

FUTURE.

Finally we don't know anything about our future. The future can bring perhaps good moments. I hope when I get older to have a very good mind and health and I am working everyday on that. I have to say thank you God for letting me make it through today.



One's the Best Time

Submitted by Roxana Beauregard
Tutor: Christine Buzzeo

For my one's the best time in my life was when I was a child. Climbing the trees, looking for the best fruit, In the winter after raining we were ready to fish, our children can't do that anymore because now is dangerous.

My mom can't buy a tv, so we walked about 20 minutes for watch tv through the window, we paid for it, depend how much money we had, ten minutes or 30 minutes. But watch tv was the best, sometimes we fight for the window.



People from a Rainforest

Submitted by Priscilla Silva
Tutor: Christine Buzzeo

Isolated native people emerged from the Amazon rainforest and made contact with the outside world. Someone filmed the moment on camera. The people wore loincloths and carried bows and arrows they communited with local villages who gave them some bananas.

The people took them, but they stepped back quickly, they were affraid of the strangers Braziliom experts said that people from rainforest more from Peru because of deforestation.



How to Tell Them?

Submitted by Lina Carvajal
Tutor: Tutors: Mohan Rao and Janet Dagg

When you take a decision about something that will change your life forever, you realize that you should start to talk about it with the people you love. The first thought that comes to your mind is how to tell them in a form that they could easily understand. That is why I decided not cut corners, so I called my parents, my brother, my boyfriend and my close relatives and I told them about my plan (not my idea because I have already took the decision) to come to United States for my own.

They were clearly concern, it was natural, I think so, they firstly thought was a nice potluck to celebrate my birthday, but instead, I told them I was planning to be in an unknown country, with strangers in their house, working for them, under their rules, and without any family or friend living close to me. They were scared for many reasons; I did not know the language, the culture or the real life here. To be honest, we already knew a lot of about this nation, Probably people from South America knows better this country that other one, it is famous for their movies, series, and in general for their eccentricity, but one thing is watch it on TV and other is reality.

The first reaction that I remember is from my mom, she completely freaked out; she was very disappointed

because I had not told her about it. My dad instead, understood easier that my mom, even though she finally accepted some days later. My real pain in the neck was my boyfriend; He and I were in a relationship for a long time already, so he was (to be honest) my only reason to waver, He was always a supporting guy, really kind and sweet with me, but I never told him my plans before, it would be hard for him, I know, but when it happened, he surprisingly supported me, and he accepted all my decision entail.

First, he would be alone for around a year or more, secondly, he obviously would change what he had to do, because almost all his free time he was with me, and thirdly, he would have to respect all my decisions here. It would be hard for either of us, be without your mate for a long time is not easy at all. Anyway, he understood, and I felt a little more head over heels in love. I was so happy that immediately later, I started the preparations.

I spent almost six months in it, I came and now I am happy and I am already getting used to living here. But when I think in that days, I cannot avoid feeling a little gloomy because from now on, I know that it is easy to tell them about your risky plans to the future, but what about tell them goodbye?, that is the hardest thing to deal, and to think it will be the last moment in a lot of time is heartbreaking, but you know what they say, all the decisions have consequences, and I am not an exception.

The English and I

Submitted by Juan Cano
Tutor: Dave Bostain

I am Mechanical Engineer since 13 years ago, when I was studying and working I had to read in English, however the writing, listening and speaking were minimal. Several times I started some English courses and never finished some.

I could read better and I learned grammar too, but my skills for the other subjects were few. I am from Columbia and one of the main problem when you are studying English is daily contact with the language, because you can stay into the English language for one or two hours, but then you come back to reality, it is your native language around.

Two years ago my family and I have moved to Tampa. This was a hard decision, but finally We took it because it is the best for our family. The idea has been study English and validate my career (it was done, I got a bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering) but I must wait about 9 months more to get the work permission.

As for the English I have learned a lot. I can run some errands and diligence and always try to communication with others, sometime is difficult but I do it! My main problem is always thinking in Spanish and to translate in my mind before talking. I just feel like words do not come to me. When I am listening to someone, I can understand part of what He or She is saying, but there are some parts that I just feel lost, and although all this can be normal sometimes it is a little bit frustrating for me.

I know that with the passing of the days I will learn more vocabulary and I will have more listening skills. I actually dream about having a normal conversation and understanding everything naturally, that day will come and will be very important for me.





My First Trip to USA

Submitted by Herminia Morales
Tutor: Carol Bockenek

It was in the year 1984 in the month of July when I flew from Cali, Colombia, for first travel to the United States of America of America with destination Los Angeles, California.

That time, the Olympic Games were inaugurated on the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Olympic stadium and was my first travel outside my country and I was well frightened and very excited because I turned away my niece Adelaide who living there since ten years ago. She lived on shantytown Hollywood, California, where on de hill have de advertisement HOLLYWOOD.

During the flight I talked with a journalist that came to covered the inaugural event, and so he gave to me a ticket for entrance to Coliseum and I had a beautiful opportunity witness my niece this beautiful spectacle of the Olympic Games. I'd never forget it.

A next day, my niece and your spouse leaved to respective jobs. And I was alone in home. But I decided leaved for knows the city of Los Angeles and de house's my niece were near a big avenue.

I remembered the I watch on TV one program called The Family Ingalls. I showing the simple life of the people to live during the recession of year 1940. Specially I liked saw the little ermita church when all neighborhood had meet each Sunday for attending dominical service. Then I decided to walk for send to my daughters a postal cards and I went to Postal Office. Y asked an walked near important avenue, and encountered from my own eyes one

lovely ermita exactly as I showed in the program of TV.

I searched the form to enter but only have a big saloon with de wood bench. I don't saw any people. In there, I was 30 minutes prayed. Then heard vocerias and movement of the people into church and entered for decorate temple with flowers and the benches with ribbons white and lilacs. Next, arrived the bridesmaid beautiful dressed, after everybody guest, and next the bridegroom that arrived on a wheelbarrow for four horses. The other person were dressed into church. The ceremony was simple and exciting.

Finally, the bridegrooms left happiness and I huge amorous to bride. Into church had a toast with champagne. After they putting a beautiful flowers orchid bouquets on chest everyone of the guest, included me. Also, their gave a patrons noticed place were of bridal reception, class of menu and dancing. As I don't had a car, not speaking English and not known the city, I only can seen the parade and many luxuries cars.

Thus, I had my first day in Los Angeles during my first travel to United States. I never can't forgot this beautiful experiences.



Helping People

Submitted by Rupert Thorpe
Tutor: Andrew Smith

I think the leaders of the world should do more to help the people to have a better life. They should try to help the people in poor countries to have a better way of living like a good education.

They should stop the people from starving from hunger and a lack of basic things like good drinking water. They could buy good housing for them to live instead of spending so much money on useless wars.

The amount of money the world spends on war could take care of millions of people who don't have anywhere to live, have no food to eat, and no good water system. We as people need to be more caring to each other like the good Bible teaches us to do. We would have a better world. I pray to God that one day we will see people as people and stop the war and killing.

----It May Happens to You?

Submitted by Roberto Mallea
Tutor: Janet Daggs

Twenty years ago as a therapist I was working at a nursing home with a male patient, when I got through on that treatment I asked to my patient: do you want me to shut your room door? and he answered: not just leave it cracked; that answer made me surprised to myself, to await twenty years to learn the meaning of the cracked door, that was on 1997 I came to USA on 1976.

Thanks for allow me to share with you and the group.



My Family

Submitted by Neomarys Duran de Chavez
Tutor: Wendy Jennings

My name is Neomarys Duran de Chavez. I'm from Dominican Republic. My parents: Jose Alberto Duran and Ana Lucia Rodriguez de Duran. Their address is 330 Duarte, Mao Dominican Republic. My father still works harvesting bananas. My mother works in her home cooking, cleaning, washing clothes. They share good times in the church. They share good times with their friends.

I was to visit in December for Merry Christmas. We share in family one lunch with my sisters Virginia and Margarita. After, we visit my two brothers, Alberto Jose and Jose Alberto. One brother lives in new Jersey. One sister lives in North Carolina. There are seven children. I was born in Mao Valverde Dominican Republic. I got married at twenty-two with Rafael E. Chavez Munoz. We have two daughters and one son. The daughters are Grethel and Angelica. They are dentist graduates in Dominican Republic. Both sisters states. They speak Spanish and English. Grethel and Angelica visit me in December.

My son Jose Rafael Chavez have seventeen years. He will finish high school. He graduates school May 19, 2017.

The Sundays we go to church my husband, my son and I. My husband and I we were Republic. Here I just work. I do housekeeping and take care of old woman.

We have little time, just three years in United States. I want to learn English to have communication with people here. Thank you for helping. Thank you teacher Wendy Jennings.

My Reason for Learning English

Submitted by Jose Patino
Tutor: Janet Daggs

Is very important to learn English for many reasons: First of all when somebody arrives to USA is necessary to learn English, because in any city of the USA, everybody speaks English and just the way to alternate with American people is talking English. But to talk not only is necessary also writing and read.

Any time if we need to fill out an application, is indispensable to know how to write English. But not only talk and write is important. Also we need to read in order to understand the news paper, books, some documents, etc.

At the same time if we watch TV, shows, moves, etc. Definitely we need to understand English.

If for any reason we need to go to the University, is indispensable to know English (Talk, Write, Read). Likewise, when we are looking for a job, is very important to dominate English to talk to the interviewer to get the position that we were looking for various months.

Therefore, always I am learning English to get my goal.

The Imaginary Friends

Submitted by Tatiane Meirelles Corpas
Tutor: Stella Bayley

Last week, my daughter who is 11 years old, told me very happy that she has 300 friends in only 2 days in Facebook. I'm 36 years old and I don't have 300 friends in all my life.

I Believe that one real friends, don't only know your dreams, your fears, your crazy, but she lives in by your side all this.

A few years ago when a person has an imaginary friend, Often this fact led as families asked for help for medical psychic and psychological to help their friends or family get through it.

Currently is very different , if you don't have a lot of friends you aren't normal ,be it imaginary or not.

The relationship between peoples are modifying next future generations , making them the most alone, reducing the capacity to live among people and accept the differences of personality and opinions.

Really, however what she calls the "Friends", it not is same that I think about or I consider "Friends".

What I can speak for my daughter is that she needs to pay more attention in agree or accept one new imaginary friends because he can hurt her.



*Accept the differences of
personality and opinions*



Exercise

Submitted by Mark Spyke
Tutor: Carol Godwin

I exercise to keep in shape and I love exercise. If I didn't work out, my body would get soft. I don't want my stomach to stick out. Exercise builds my testosterone and exercise builds my mind. When your body feels weak, your mind feels foggy.

I exercise at L.A. Fitness. I tried other gyms in the past, but L.A. Fitness is the best for me. It is for both men and women. I have many friends there, so it is also a good place to relax and talk with my friends. We talk about our jobs and our families.

When I exercise, I lift heavy weights because that makes me feel strong. I work my back, chest, arms, legs and stomach. For my chest, back and legs, I start out at 225 pounds and work up to 315 pounds. My stomach and arm weights vary by how I am feeling each day.

When I am finished with all those weights, I feel relaxed. I get cardio exercise at my job where I walk a great deal. Exercise helps me deal with tension and stress. I recommend exercise for everyone. Give it a try!

Touching Lives

Submitted by Luz Stella Calvo
Tutor: Lisa Clementi

My name is Luz Stella and I was born and raised in Columbia. I'm the youngest of five brothers and sisters. I have been living in the United States for fifteen years. I first lived in New Jersey for three years. Then, I moved to Tampa in 2004. I've been married for the last eleven years to a wonderful man, Raymond.

I have two degrees from Colombia, one in Business Administration and the other in Industrial Technology. My first job in the United States was as a nanny for a family of four children in Wayne, New Jersey. I worked for them for three years. In that time I understood that I wanted to work with children and started my study in Early Childhood Education. After I moved to Tampa, I started to work for a Montessori School in a Prekindergarten Class.

I had always studied English on my own until one year ago. I started with my tutor, Lisa Clementi. She is a great teacher and always willing to help me. I want to share with everyone a story that happened to me very recently and touched my heart.

One day, I was in the classroom with my group of children and I started telling them a story about the importance of helping others. To complete the explanation, I showed them a video about a five year old girl who donated her hair. When we finished watching the video, some children asked questions and I answered them.



Within this group of children there was a girl with extremely long hair. It was straight and medium brown in color. She simply paid close attention to the video. I saw in her face that she was touched by the video, but she didn't say anything. In that moment and later, she approached me with a smile on her face and asked me if I was going to donate my hair. I explained that I could not donate because my hair has been dyed before.

A few days later, the school year was over and this girl went on Summer vacation. I didn't see her again. Two months later, she went to visit me at the school. I was very surprised when I saw her with short hair, as her hair was so long in the past. It was past her lower back and now it was shoulder length. She mentioned to me that she donated her hair to a charity over the Summer.

My heart was filled with great joy to know that the experience had impacted the life of such a small child.



My Reflections on Life

Submitted by Nelly Vinokurov
Tutor: Janet Daggs

In my childhood my parents were the best example for me how people should live a decent life without cunning, deception, lies and hate.

When I was in High School one of my teachers became my mentor not only on her subject. She talked to the class of girls (it was girl's school) about the best paths in life and how to live.

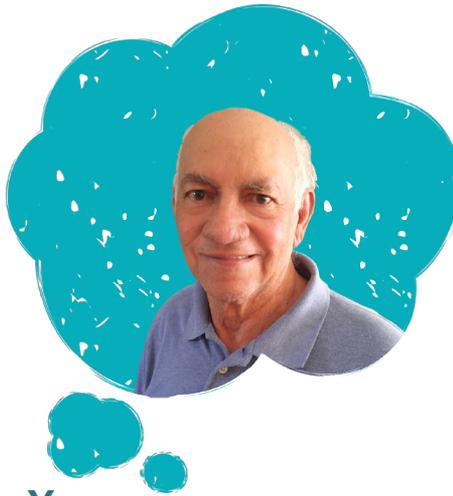
...All my life I was trying to avoid the wrong decisions.

And now, at my golden age, when people should be wise, it's not always clear, which way is the best. People are mortal, they don't know, what is above their understanding. The logic helps, but not always.

...The only part of life I am sure in is my compassion towards others, trying to help by word and deed. I wish all people would feel the same.



*The only part of
life I am sure in
is my compassion
towards others*



For You

Submitted by Ernesto Millan Zuñiga
Tutor: Carol Bockenek

Laugh, Relax, Forgive, Do a Favor.
Request Help, Delegate Tasks.
Break a habit, Do a Long Walk,
Express your ideas.
Learn something that always you
desired, Do a Favor
Go to Run, Paint a Picture
Smile to your son, Watch old photos
Allow yourself to shine
Read a good book
Sing in the shower Listen to a Friend
Accept a compliment
Assist to an elderly
Comply with your promises
End your desired project
Remember your childhood, Be a boy
another time
Hear the nature
Express your happiness, Write in your
diary,
Permit yourself to make a mistake
Make a family album, Take a long bath
Today don't worry
Allow that someone help you
Look a flower with attention Waste a
little time
Turn off the T.V. and speak
Listen to your preferred music
Call up your friends by phone
Do a little change in your life
Do a listing of things well done
Go to the library, Hear the silent
Close the eyes and imagine the waves
Make somebody feel good
Say to the lovers persons how much
love them
Give a name to a star
You know that you won't be alone
Think in how much you have
Give yourself a gift Prepare a travel
Breath deep, Cultivate the love.



Tatyana Memories

Submitted by Tatyana Cherepenko
Tutor: Teodora "Teddy" Phillips

My name is Tatyana, I come from Ukraine to Italy on 6-th July 2004. I remember very good this day...it change my life.

I was student and I studied Italian language. In that time I visited many interesting places in beautiful Italy, like Rome, Venice, Florence, Milan, Genoa. It is very different country with its own dialects, traditions, architecture and food with infinity variety of pasta, different sweets, gelato and the best wines in the world. In Italy is a lot of churches and cathedrals, best museums. Everybody know Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Botticelli. I think Italian people have best of everything. They are very friendly and hospitality people.

One day, I was for my job in Nord of Italy and I met my husband, he is military and we are moved to Tampa in 2013 for 6 months. It was my first time in USA! Our son started walking here, on the beautiful beaches of Gulf of Mexico. We are back to Italy and in 2016 back to Tampa again.

Now our son is 4 years old and he started speak English here. For us it is very important.

I am very happy to be here. It is very beautiful experience, we meet different people and have good friends from different country and cultures. I studied English on library and I like it very much. We visited different places in Florida and USA.

This is a short experience but it is a very intense experience. One day I hope my son come to Tampa for job like his father and I can see again all my friends. My friends and life in USA will be always on my heart.

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Tutors Who Served Over 100 Hours

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Bernadette Cook
Stephen Drumm
Adam Knaggs

Katherine Lewis
Debby Loudin
Catherine Luthin
Mary Malmquist

William Miller
Frank Shideler
Julie Tollen
Lark Underwood

2017 Conversation Corner Organizers

Steve Drumm
Carol Bockenek
Lisa Clementi
Deb Haynes

Janet Daggs
Tiffany Marshall
Norma Rodriguez
Hilary Roach

Alicia Ellison
Sylvia Covington
James Hargrett
Silvia Morgan

Tutor Trainers/Mentors

Diane Grey
Lark Underwood

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Special thanks to The Mosaic Company for their generous support of our annual tutor-student recognition ceremony.

The Hillsborough Literacy Council, Inc. (HLC) is a volunteer-based nonprofit organization committed to helping adults achieve basic reading and writing skills as well as English comprehension and communication skills.



HILLSBOROUGH LITERACY COUNCIL

Teaching Adults to Read and to Speak English



**Hillsborough
County Florida**



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