



Visions

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

September 2012

HILLSBOROUGH
LITERACY COUNCIL

Teaching Adults to Read and to Speak English

The Hillsborough Literacy Council is committed to improving literacy by empowering adults through its education programs in Adult Basic Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages. We are celebrating 26 years of service in Hillsborough County.

Welcome



From HLC's President

The battle to improve adult literacy in Hillsborough County continues, but if we keep working together, I know we can win it!

Teaching English-speaking and non-

English-speaking adults to read and write unlocks a very important door. Having the interest to think of an idea then write it down is a mechanism for sharing information or thoughts with others. By writing and telling your stories, whether factual or imagined, you put your mark on the world and help to shape and influence the thoughts of others.

For 26 years, the Hillsborough Literacy Council has been committed to helping adults realize their dreams of learning to read, write and speak English. It's the most effective way we have to combat illiteracy and significantly decrease language barriers in our county.

As we look toward the future and our campaign to improve adult literacy, the need for continued support from the community is more critical than ever because of how much more complicated the world has become and as a result, our lives as well.

I hope you'll enjoy reading the narratives that fill these pages, and that you and others will be inspired to join the effort and become a volunteer.

LaQuinda Brewington
President, Hillsborough Literacy Council



From the Library Director

Achievements in adult literacy cover a wide range of life changing events. It can be as personal as being able to read a bedtime story

to your child, as necessary as getting a better job to support your family, or as significant as becoming a new citizen. Those who dedicate the time to become proficient in reading or learning English as a nonnative speaker open their worlds in ways they can hardly imagine.

I congratulate the hard-working students and tutors who have come together, worked through challenges, and forged paths to accomplish their goals. I applaud those students who have crafted essays sharing their personal stories for this issue of *Visions*, and thank the tutors who encouraged their participation.

Everyone, from the tutors to the students to the Board of Directors, all have a part in carrying out Hillsborough Literacy Council's important mission – to empower adults through education. For that, I offer my sincerest thanks. I hope we have created lifelong readers.

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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2012 Stories

The Language of Symbols

I was doing research about the history of Tampa, the city in which I reside, and I found something that caught my attention. It is the meaning of the official seal of the city of Tampa and how it is linked to Havana, the capital of my homeland, Cuba.

The region on which Tampa is located was inhabited by Native American groups and the development and growth of the city was slow due to the conflicts with the Seminoles and frequent outbreaks of yellow fever. It wasn't until the 1800's with the introduction of the railroads that facilitated the trade, and the increase in industrial commerce, mainly the cigar manufacture, mostly run by Cuban workers, that began drawing residents to the city. The warm and humid climate of the city was perfect to keep the tobacco leaves fresh and workable, and the proximity to Cuba made the imports easy by sea. Then the railroad would make shipment of finished cigars to the rest of the country easy by land. This industry was making the city prosper.

The city of Tampa shows a depiction of a steamboat named Mascotte inside two circles. I asked what was the reason or the honor that this vessel conquered and I learned that in February, 1896, it took over military power of the island of Cuba. A Spaniard general, by the name of Valeriano Weyler unleashed a wave of murders, putting the Cuban people who were revolting against the Spanish colonial rule in refugee camps killing thousands of them by starvation. This general, knowing that Tampa was a city

often visited by Cuban leaders, like Jose Marti, who came several times to raise money and volunteers for the cause against Spain among the Cuban cigar workers, tried to paralyze the tobacco industry of Tampa by enacting a law that prohibited the load of tobacco from Havana or any other port of the island to U.S. territory. The workers turned to Mr. Henry B. Plant, who was the founder of the Plant system of railroads and steamboats. He sent his vessel the Mascotte to Havana to rescue American tourists who were in Cuba. The Spanish-American War was approaching and they feared for their safety. They brought the last cargo of tobacco before the law took effect. It is said that tobacco leaves were stored everywhere in the ship, even the cabins. If Tampa did not produce cigars the whole world would suffer the consequences. The estimated value of the export of cigars was over \$100,000,000 a year. The Mascotte save us that time.

Submitted by: Julio Cesar Zamora
Tutor: Maria-Pattie Walker

My Town

Each place in the world has different features, such as weather, culture, food,; therefore it is exciting and enjoyable to move to new places. If a person I know is planning to move to my town, Tokyo, Japan, this person would like my city since Tokyo has an advanced public transportation network, great education system, and beautiful four seasons.

First of all, a perfect public transportation system makes your life very convenient. Tokyo has the most advanced and precise public transportation in the world, including trains, subways, and buses. When people commute, go to school, or visit anywhere, they do not need cars because the public transportation is available every few minutes and is the fastest way to reach

the destination. Moreover, the cost of public transportation in Tokyo is very low, so people do not have to worry about paying a lot of money for cars, gas, and insurance if they live in my town.

Second, schools, including most top schools are concentrated in Tokyo, so people can make a choice from a variety of schools and majors if they are in Tokyo. In fact, many Japanese who are not in Tokyo move to Tokyo to attend school, otherwise, they need to give up their favorite schools. If you are already in Tokyo, you have a benefit of choosing a better school and having a better education.

Most importantly, Tokyo has four wonderful seasons. Every season brings beautiful views and delicious foods. In the spring, pink-colored cherry blossoms are magnificent, and the fall shows colorful leaves, which are red, orange, and yellow. The beauty of nature in my town is incredible. In addition, fresh sea food, such as sashimi and sushi, is extremely tasty in the winter, and many kinds of fruits and vegetables are produced in the summer. As a result,

Each place in the world has different features, such as weather, culture, food,; therefore it is exciting and enjoyable to move to new places.

—Yuko Onodera

people in my city enjoy every season and look forward to the coming next seasons.

In conclusion, my town, Tokyo, is a unique city in terms of transportations, education, and seasons. Therefore, I believe that most people would love living in Tokyo.

Submitted by: Yuko Onodera
Tutor: Maria-Pattie Walker

Experiencing being a mother for first time

In August last year, I had my baby girl Isabella. I'm sure that she is the most beautiful gift God could give me; I started to be a mom since the first moment I had her in my hands. I think that being a mother is just natural. When I was pregnant I was scared because I didn't know anything about babies, but as soon I saw her I just felt confident, I knew I could do it. I will say that being a mother during the first year has three different stages the first one goes from 0-4 month of age, the second one goes from 4-8, and finally 8-12 months. All three were really different for me and for Isabella.

When she was born day zero, she was beautiful; everything started to be different for me. I was awake almost 24 hours a day, I was worried she wasn't eating enough, so while she slept I was up trying to drink as much water as I can; eating all kind of stuff people recommended me. I think I was getting more weight that I was losing. Isabella in her first two months was easy she ate and slept almost all the time, I had to learn how to bathe her and have an exact schedule for feeding time. This was a beautiful time, she was quiet and tiny, but at the same time was a little bit boring. When she reached 3 months

...I can say that being a mother is the most beautiful work in life; I will say that also is the most difficult.

—Maria Angelica Pinzon

everything started to change, she started to be more demanding, and she wanted me all the time next to her. I started to feel that I could not do anything for me and all my life was just about her. I realized that she was all I wanted and it was going to be difficult but she was my happiness.

When she was 4 months old the fun part started. She started to eat baby food and the interaction between us was wonderful, I knew when she was ready to eat, when it was enough food, and when she just wanted to play. I begun to be more comfortable with house's shores and taking care of her, time didn't past so fast, and I had more time for me. We started going out together to the mall, store, and even to the park. I felt I was getting my life back. When she was seven months old I went back to work, that was difficult for many reasons; It was sad for me thinking to leave her, even though she was going to be with her grandmother, It was a challenge to got her ready, me ready and food for the day ready. Like everything in live I learned how to do it and when she was eight I was glad I was working again.

The last four months had been the fastest months of this year, time started to pass so fast. Isabella started to crawl when she was nine months, that was one of the most exacting moments of this year, it was amazing, I was ironing our cloth and she was playing in front of me in her play gym I was watching her one moment and suddenly she disappeared; when I started looking for her I found her next to me, I didn't see the first time she crawled and it took me some days to see her. She didn't want to do it when I was looking. When she

was eleven months old she started to walk, everybody told me that was when she will become difficult, but it didn't happened to me. Isabella now is walking and it is easier for me than before, she does not depend on me for everything and she is more independent.

In a conclusion, I can say that being a mother is the most beautiful work in life; I will say that also is the most difficult. I can say that we never will know everything about how to be the perfect mother but we can learn and try to be a wonderful mother for our babies every day.

Submitted by: Maria Angelica Pinzon
Tutor: Maria-Pattie Walker

Slip Slide and Away

I slip away alone by myself into a dark shadow. This is one of the days of my life. As the young get restless we enter into the edge of night, sliding away from ourselves. It is the guiding light in my search for tomorrows outcome. And in a way we all search for the best things to happen in life. Sometimes they seem out of our reach but the harder we try the closer they come. Slip slide and away is a good thing. It will remind you of all the good things in your life--kindness, friends, love, the people you love and the people that love you.

To all I end this with Slip Slide and Away.

Submitted by: Eugene
Tutor: Flo Stein

My Summer Vacation

It all started like this. My bible study teacher, Barbara, asked me if I could get some time off from my job. If so, she said she would like for me to ride with her on her trip to Indiana and that on the way she could drop me off in Findlay, Ohio so that I could see my family, brothers, daughter and grandkids that I had not seen in six years.

My manager said I could take the time off from June 21st through July 3rd.

We took interstate 75 all the way up. It was a two day ride. Barbara knew the way up and back because she had traveled that way many of times. But the ride back home to Florida was a good trip. She took the old roads home through the mountains. We went through Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee in order to visit the Smokey Mountains.

We visited the tourist stops and mountain stations to get a good view of the pretty forests and mountains. All of the views were beautiful.

We made it home on July 3rd. I went to work again on July 5th. I felt rested and happy when we got home and I know one thing now--you can't go back to your old past and home. But can never stay for things change in time. It's best just to visit and go on with your life and new friends. Like my teacher, Mrs. Flo Stein, and all others that I have met in my life in Plant City, Florida.

Submitted by: Jalynn
Tutor: Flo Stein

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

My name is Dilsa Bernal, I have 62 years of Panamanian nationality and I am the sign Leo. I grew up and lived all my life in a poor neighborhood and within a large family, which suffered from multiple deprivation, abuses and needs. For obtain one of my objectives or goals as I was graduating from High School to work and make many sacrifices since childhood, since my mother was widowed very young and had no money to pay my studies.

I had three children and this inspired me to complete my studies and be able to give my children a better quality of life.

—Dilsa Bernal

I had my three children and this inspired me to complete my studies and be able to give my children a better quality of life. After so many years to come forward one day to the wonderland, come to USA to realize that all fantasies created in my head were just fantasies. But still I thank God for every new experience and lived every day that gives me and teaches me to value family, friends, health and love mine.

Submitted by: Dilsa Bernal
Tutor: Janet Daggs

The hope of the love

My name is Paulo and I want to give thanks to Jesus Christ, my Lord and my Savior because he gives me the chance to know my wife. I wait to live with her for almost six years. I only see her once time in the year, because I live in Argentina and she lives here in the United States. That wasn't an easy venture, because we miss each other. But God bring us strength for continue in this long relationship.

Now, after all those years, we live together and we attended at 'Over the rock' Baptist church, and I'm learning English as second language in the Hillsborough County Library in Town'Country. Thanks again to God because He do this possible.

I am very grateful to my tutor, Mrs. Janet Daggs. She is a good teacher and she helps me to continue learning the English Class. She is very patient with me.

Submitted by: Paulo Arieu
Tutor: Janet Daggs

Untitled

My name is Ramiro Barrero

My wife name is Flor Manzano

We are from Columbia

We're married. We arrived at the United State in 4-30-2006, at 2:00 PM o'clock.

Our daughter, granddaughter and boyfriend my daughter – they're waiting in the airport of the Miami, and then we go to the South Beach, take pictures, walking to the Ocean Drive Ave.

Saw many peoples – and good restaurants. Take two beer my wife one cocktail.

At six o'clock – we go to the Tampa. Maritza's boyfriend drove 4 hours.

I love Tampa. My first job was in the airport of Tampa, cleaning elevator – and loader. Worked two months; and then find job in other company named D.S.E. Inc. Manufactory – product - to the government. (I have experience in machinery of plastic in my country during thirty years.) Immediately. Get me training to operate one machine. — Good job.—

We're happy. Learn English with Mr. Frank Shideler. – Good teacher and very nice person.

I want speak good English and to be American citizenship.

I love United State.

Submitted by: Ramiro Barrero
Tutor: Frank Shideler

A Story about Myself

I grew up in a small town in Jamaica called Cataboo. It was a very small village where everyone knew everyone else. I was the third child of eight children.

My father died in a motorcycle accident when I was very young. Since that happened my mother had it hard raising all of us so she

started making baskets to sell in the town market. I had some of the responsibilities raising my younger siblings. I would wash, cook, clean and help dress and feed my younger siblings.

I stayed in school until I was 15 but going to school was very difficult. We did not have school buses or any transportation in our district. We had to walk for hours around six miles to get to school in the town. I was tired when I got to school and I had a hard time learning all of what they were teaching me.

By age 18 I became a mother, and then again it placed an even bigger hold on my education. After a while it didn't seem to matter whether I knew how to read or not until my children became old enough to need my help with homework and I wasn't able to help them anymore.

It was only a little over two years ago that my daughter introduced me to a program for adults like myself who wanted to learn to read and write well. We signed up for the program and waited for someone to call.

A wonderful lady named Sue volunteered her time to teach me how to read and write. She was very patient with me. A short time after her help I was able to take the written drivers' license exam, and passed! Thanks to her dedication

and the support and encouragement of my three children, I am writing this today.

Now I can read bedtime stories to my grandchildren and I continue to improve each day.

Life was hard and also sweet when I was growing up. Christmas was my favorite time of the year, because everyone would come together to make a big party and the decorations were beautiful.

We made the best of what we had and always thanked God for every blessing that came our way.

The End

Submitted by: Paulette Dibbs
Tutor: Sue O'Neil

Learning To Drive In The USA

This story is two years old. I took a driver's license test. At that time, we had just come back to the USA from Korea and my husband bought a van. And so, all the time, he would take and bring me everywhere and we were always together going the same way. There was no problem with one car. But one day, my husband took the car to work and I used a bus one way to the library and to return home, I walked.

After one hour of walking, I reached home. The walk was a terrible trial. The sun was too strong and my body was sweating. I looked like I had been caught in the rain. The exposure was intense and after three days, I got sick. I had a fever. My temperature was too high. I was cold, my body shook and I couldn't move. I was really sick.

Later, my husband asked me if I would take a driving course and I made an appointment for a written examination. With some restored courage, I took the test. They had two types of tests. One was a computer test and one was a paper test. When I took the computer test, I failed. Ha, ha, ha! I returned home and studied hard. I tried again. I failed again. The third time, I took the paper test and, Oh my God, I passed. Wow! Everybody congratulated me. I took a picture with the office staff. It was awesome.

Next was the driving course test. The first time, I practiced with the van. I was thinking that the van was too big for me. My legs were too short. I pushed on the brake and accelerator to practice. I tried really hard. However, after three days of training, I decided to go to driving lessons. I watched as the other student drivers drove the course. Lots of people couldn't pass the orange cones without touching them. Then I got a headache because the van was way too big for me. I worried so much about parking the van that my husband rented a small car for me to practice my driving.

One day, all day long, I practiced. The next day I took the test, but I couldn't pass the parallel parking. Two days later, I tried again. Oh my God! I passed. Wow!

A few days after, my husband presented me with a big, blue luxury car. I was so indebted to my husband at that time. He made me a comfortable life and said, "I am so sorry you got sick walking home and I never want you to be sick again".

I remember that time well because I was so excited that my memory is still fresh.

Submitted by: Jeung Mei Choi
Tutor: Sylvia Covington

Acknowledgements

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Teaching Adults to Read and to Speak English

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