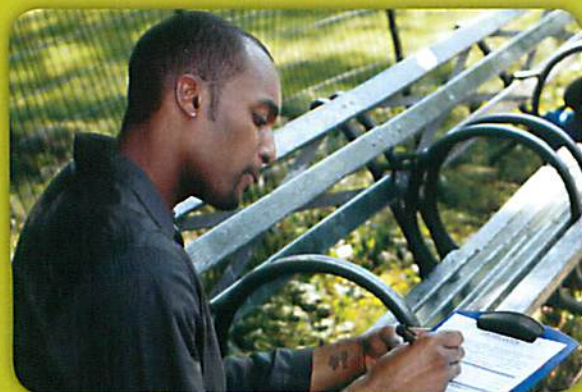




visions⁰⁹

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



HILLSBOROUGH
LITERACY COUNCIL

Teaching Adults to Read and to Speak English

welcome



From HLC's President

*Will you succeed? Yes, you will indeed. (98 3/4% guaranteed.)**

Writing a story is not easy. For some people, there may be so many possible life

experiences or family tales, it is hard to pinpoint the exact story to tell. Or, as many writers can attest to, writer's block may occur and it becomes difficult to start or complete a writing task. However, once a writer has decided on their story, they have to find the best words to tell it. If the writer is lacking most of the words he or she needs, it is frustrating and easy to give up.

The *Visions* book is a printed celebration by, and for, those adults who have not abandoned their goals of learning to read and write the English language. Working diligently with their tutor, class after class, the students represented in the following pages have found the words they need. The stories they tell are the beginning of the countless future opportunities they will have to express themselves with the exact words that come to mind and not the same substitutes they have always used because those are the only words they know how to read and write.

Congratulations to those who contributed to this year's *Visions* and best wishes to all of our students for future success!

Richard Zingale
President, Hillsborough Literacy Council

**Oh the Places You Will Go - by Dr. Seuss.*



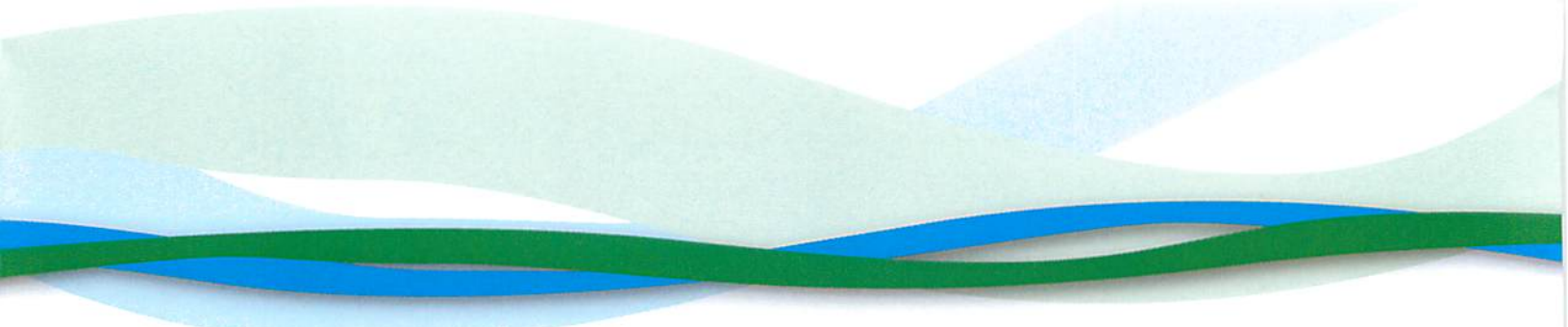
From the Library Director

During these difficult economic times, citizens need as many skills and advantages as possible. Many families are being encouraged and their

lives improved by the generous volunteer efforts of the Hillsborough Literacy Council, its students, dedicated tutors and Board. The gift of reading, although requiring patience and hard work from both tutor and student, is a most valuable asset when completed.

The personal and inspirational stories contained in this new edition of *Visions* illustrate both the value and the outstanding effort put forth. Congratulations. May you join library staff and me in becoming 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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essays

My Life

Submitted by: Rosie Avila
Tutor: Mari Sakai

My name is Rosie Avila. I was born in 1949. My father was Marcelo Avila. He was born in Mexico. My mother was Maria Guadalupe Avila. She was born in Texas. They were married in McAllen, Texas. Then my father decided to move to Oklahoma. All this time we were migrant workers. We moved from state to state looking for work. My father decided to stay in Oklahoma so my younger brother and sisters had a better chance to stay in school. Because I was one of the older ones I had to help to support the family. I grew up with limited education. I always wanted to go back to school. After many years I got a job in a factory, raised a daughter and granddaughter, and made sure they both finished high school. I didn't want my children to struggle the way I have. Hard work has never been a problem for me but asking someone to help me fill forms is the hardest thing I've done. Today I work for Publix. My lack of education has not stopped me from trying to better myself. My sister Annie lives in Texas. She tells me not to give up. We call each other and we read over the phone. She hopes that someday I will graduate even if I am 90 years

old. I started going to night school. That's where I met Miss Mari and she became my tutor. We meet twice a week for reading. Thank you so much Miss Mari for being here for me.

How I Became an American Citizen

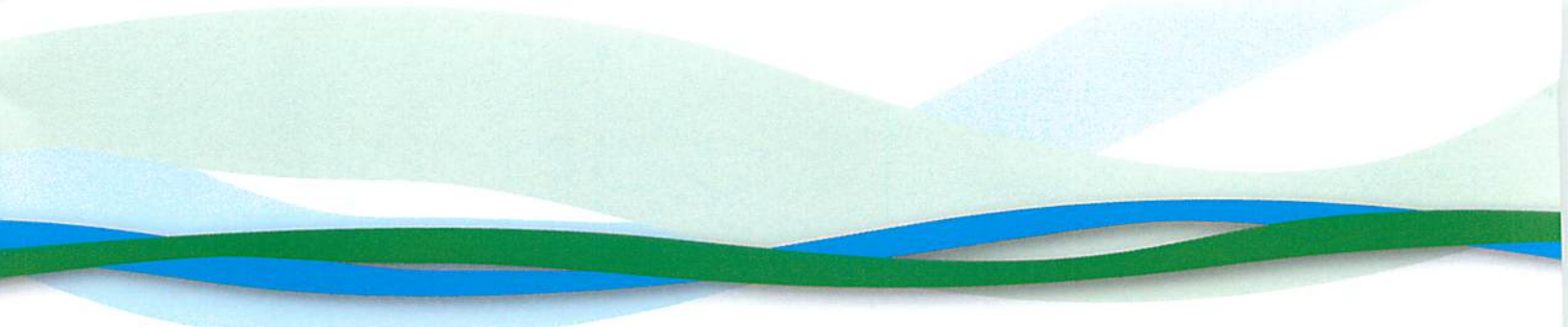
Submitted by: Angel Chamberlain
Tutor: Jessie Bush

Hi, my name is Angel Chamberlain. I came from Taiwan in 1973. My mother, three brothers and one sister still live in Taiwan. My husband's name is Dwight. I have two sons, Dennis and Mark. I have two grandchildren. I love them very much. We lived in New Mexico from 1973 to 1976 and moved to Iowa January 1976. We went to a little town called Marion, Iowa, and we bought a house. We met many friends and also, I was introduced to one special friend. Her name is Lee. She is from Taiwan too. Several months later we became very good friends. One day she asked me "Do you want to become an American citizen?" I told her I have never been in a class before and she said "I will help you."

At the same time, I am thinking how can I go to the citizenship class with her? I cannot read and write. How can I learn? I went home to tell

my husband what Lee said. My husband said "It is up to you! I think you should go to the class and give yourself a chance to learn and think about your future. You are living in the United States. You should try to do it and I will try to help you." The next day I called Lee to tell her I will go to the class and I have something to tell you. I cannot read and write. She said "It's okay. I know Mr. Riley and I will talk to him about it."

A man walked into the classroom. He said "Welcome to the citizenship class. My name is Mr. Riley and I am a retired judge. You can call me Judge Riley. There are three things I will say to you: Don't forget where you came from! Don't let anyone tell you that you are different! You will learn some of the American histories and I will help each one of you. I know some of you cannot read, and he looked at me and he said with a smile, say your name and where you came from." There was a total of 25 people in the class and we all came from different countries. He passed around some books and 10 pages of 100 questions and answers of American history. After the class he said to me "I want you to study all of the 100 questions and answers and come to all of the classes."



The next class I had a problem understanding what Mr. Riley said. I went home and told my husband "I am having a hard time to understand the questions. Do you have any idea what would help me to learn? I need this class. Mr. Riley said he will help me and I need to pass the test, so please, can you think of something that would help?" The next day my husband put the questions and answers on the tape. Every day I listened to the tape over and over for ten hours a day. I went to the class three nights a week for over six months. I am proud to say, after all the hard work, I was able to pass the test and become an American citizen in 1977.

I was so lucky to find a wonderful teacher like Mr. Riley to help me. He was a kind and caring man that would take his time to help anyone he could, especially someone like me. Special thanks to Mr. Riley for taking time to teach me American history.

I would like to tell everyone, please don't learn the hard way like I did. I have been in the Hillsborough Literacy Program since 2005. I am now able to write my story. "Please tell your friends and loved ones to go to school and tell them about the Hillsborough Literacy Council, and tell them it is very important

for every one to learn to read and write. Maybe you can tell your own stories too! Don't do like I did and wait for thirty or forty years to learn. Once again, thank you so much, Mr. Riley. I will always remember what a wonderful teacher you were."

Starting Again

Submitted by: Krystyna Rybak
Tutor: James Morotti

We came to the USA in December 16 1982, we came because my husband was a foreman in a Polish coal mine and spent 10 months in prison for his membership in Solidarity, the outlawed Polish trade union. When he was released, he was told to conform to the Communist regime or leave the Country. It was a stressful time, because my husband was beaten in jail and we were concerned about my children and family. We would have to go to another country, and I was concerned about not being able to speak American English. It took about five years for me to communicate on a basic level. It was difficult doing everyday activities, especially finding work. I felt good about being in America and was happy to see how fast my children learned English. They assimilated into American life very easily.

I am now working hard to improve my English skills and I feel more comfortable when speaking, even though I still have a heavy accent.

I would like to thank the Hillsborough County Literacy Council for giving me this opportunity.

Learning to Read

Submitted by: Larry Hemmingway
Tutor: Sue Miller

We have come a long ways in our reading. We are doing really well and we will continue doing our best. I can now read four books: "City Living," "In the Valley," "More Stories 2," and "More Stories 3." I am most of the way through the Laubach book series #3. I am going to keep practicing reading until I finish all four books.

A New Experience

Submitted by: Gladys Britton
Tutor: Lyndsey Davidson

Hello there. My name is Gladys Britton. I was born in Venezuela, South America. Over 21 years I taught in elementary levels in public schools. When I came to this country I said I will like to continue teaching but the language is the barrier. I'm afraid to speak with some people in different situations. One day when I moved to Tampa

essays

I decided to look for a job in public schools. After I try for one month I ask for a job at the high school level and I show my resume and the supervisor hired me for my experience in school systems. Of course the position is not teaching it was for autistic children. That experience was a new experience for me and unforgettable. My duties was follow a girl all day through her classes, and help her to focus and motivating in each assignment. Annie learned from me to reduce the letters when she wrote and I learned from Annie the sweetness that people can be.

Writing About My Country

Submitted by: Marco Espinoza
Tutor: Sadia Ahmed

I was born in Ecuador, a beautiful country located in South America, his name is because its territory is crossed by the equatorial line that divides the world into the north and south hemispheres, for this reason Ecuador is in the middle of the world, to the north is Colombia and to the east and south is Peru.

Ecuador has a population of 14 million of habitants, his capital is Quito, a colonial and modern city where are the government and its

administrative offices. The main port is Guayaquil, a very active business city located on the coast of the Pacific Ocean.

The best of my country Ecuador is the great hospitality of the people and the big diversity of its nature, because you have the possibility to know very beautiful and comfortable cities in the mountain region crossed by volcanoes, glaciers and valleys, the nice coast region with beautiful and natural beaches, the amazing forest jungle region and the Galapagos Islands, considered Heritage of Humanity.

Ecuador's economy depends on the export of petroleum and natural products such as bananas, flowers, cocoa, shrimps and tuna, whose quality is recognized in the world. Ecuador adopted the dollar as its national currency in 2000, following a major banking crisis and recession in 1999.

The Ecuadorians people has a regular diet of rice, potatoes and meat, chicken and pork can be found anywhere , there are many tropical fruits and most Ecuadorians prefer beer, and in second place rum.

The most popular sport is soccer, which has had great success this past decade and has participated in the last two

World Cups in Japan 2002 and Germany 2006.

Unfortunately, Ecuador has a difficult economic situation because the same problems of the region and the world, but aggravated by the lack of honest leadership to drive to build a better country. However, I am very proud of my country for its people and all visitors are welcome to enjoy its natural beauty and hospitality.

Thank You, Jehovah, Because We Live in America

Submitted by: Elisabeth Etchene
Tutor: Carmen Mattei

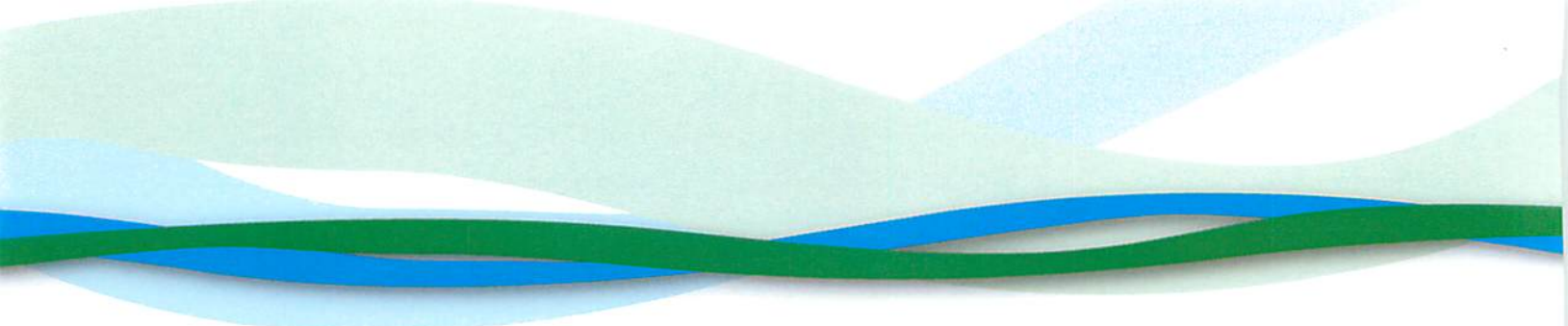
I continue to study because I want to know how to read and write. I want to be able to read my bible more easily for myself and for others. I want to thank this program that is doing so much to teach people how to read and write.

It Wasn't Easy

Submitted by: Luz Marina Marquez
Tutor: Pauline Lynch

My family and I came to this country four years ago. It wasn't easy for us to leave our families, our customs where everything was different for us.

We have three boys. The oldest son is 26 years, the second son is 23 years and the youngest



son is 17 years old. Our children had to leave school to come here to this country and start again. Have been four years a lot of work and effort. Our oldest son is studying Recording Arts and will be graduating in two years. Our second son will graduate next August I and he will get degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts in Recording Arts with High Honors and now we see some of our dreams come true. Our youngest son will be graduating next year from High School with honors too, now he gets letters many different universities in different state. They have been very good students.

We give thanks to God for everything that he has given us, for all the blessings that we have received. To this country for welcoming us and our teachers that across of these years have helped us so much, particularly Pauline Lynch by all their support, for her patience for teach us.

GOD BLESS YOU!

Old Man at 24!

Submitted by: Hongadema Tchamitoki
Tutor: Neil and Pat Pekovsky

My name is Hongadema TCHAMITOKI. I'm from Togo, a small country in West Africa. I'm 24 and at my age I already have spent a life very rich in

experiences, which make say that I'm old man at 24. Born in very modest but big family in Africa, I lost my mother at 8. My dad had more than one wife and to avoid any trouble with other wives, I left our home after my mom's death. My life, then, changed completely. At first I started in order to have someone who could help me go to school, being with people who finally treated me like their domestic worker. And then I decided to live and go to school by myself. But school fees were very high in my country and I couldn't afford paying them alone. So the few I got by working hard in week-end and vacations was just enough to help my father. But at high school things got harder for me and I seeked for the help from the Salesian Christian Community of my city. They helped me by giving me a shelter and paying a part of my school fees until I got my high school Diploma. And then I had to move to another city (300 miles) to continue my school. My dream was to become a judge or a police officer, and to fulfill it I needed at first a Master's Degree in Law. As you could imagine there was too many obstacles in my way but I was determined to get what I wanted. Except the university inscription fees which were the highest in Africa, I never

went before in that city and there was no one I knew there. But I decided to move there and on my moving day, I met, in the car, a lady, who became like a mother for me. Because of her, life became easier for me when I was at the university, and I got my Master's Degree in Law five years later.

How did I come to America after all that and what about my dream now? I don't really know what to say about how I've got here. I had never thought I could be here one day because I had never planned it. Not because I didn't like it but because I thought it could be impossible for me. "The American dream is not for people like me"; I used to say. But one day, after class, a friend asked me to play to the American Lottery Visa Program. I refused. He told me he could do it for if I gave him just one of my pictures. I accepted and one year later I received a call telling me that I've won. What a good surprise! Sometime when I think about my life, I'm so amazed by what God did and still doing for me. God loves me so much. Right now I'm having my 10th month here and next month I will be shipped to South Carolina for my Boot Camp, because I've decided to join the Army. Since I came here I've met wonderful people and

essays

English as Second Language has been very helpful for me. For someone at my age, I can say I know a lot about life with my experiences. That lets me say I'm old, old man at 24! But I think the American dream is possible for me and I'm looking forward to have mine.

School

Submitted by: Marie Ipote
Tutor: Marjorie Nesman

My husband's name is Papa Sarr. He was a driver at Hotel Clarion. That job was very hard and didn't pay very well. So he decided to go to Hillsborough Community College in the nursing program. When he started school, he said it was easy. Later it was hard but he didn't stop. He prayed to God for forgiveness because he was thinking that he could do it by himself. God forgave him. Then he started to understand the lessons and he finished school and graduated. Now he will have to take the exam.

We feel good about it.

Learning to Read Again

Submitted by: Larry Valdez
Tutor: Marjorie Nesman

I am writing for my teacher, Marje. I didn't speak a word because of a stroke and I couldn't

understand. It was a very hard time for me. I learned more words that first year from my speech therapist, Rose. Later I got much help from Marje who taught me phonics and reading. Speech therapy at USF also helped. Marje has helped me almost 2 years. I had 2 Laubach phonics books and I had 3 Focus on Phonics, the sounds and name of letters, and some books had stories. The Focus had pictures with words.

Sport Summer

Submitted by: Carlos Alvarado
Tutor: Lois Munger

My sport favorite is cycle. I try to ride every day ever 20 mile is the trail Citrus Park whose long have 7 mile. It is depend the my free time available. Nonetheless I have to ride after that I came the work on afternoon. This sport I like to much because help me to burn calories and relax too. But all weekend I ride in the morning because the weather is more fresch and the sun is not warm.

Learning English

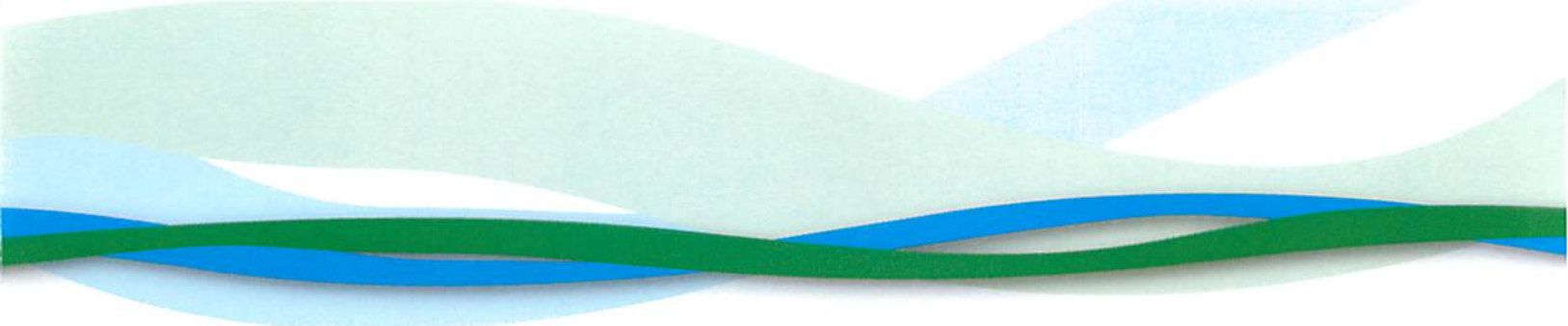
Submitted by: Claudia Hernandez
Tutor: Mary Bergen

I moved to USA ten years ago and my biggest challenge has been to learn English. I learned to write and read English first because none of my earliest

classes focus on listening and speaking. Learning a second language would be more difficult if you try to read and write before you can speak and listen. We learned our native language in this order: listen, talk, read and write. I think that if we simulate this process to learn a second language, we can learn it faster.

I think that the first thing you should do to learn English is to listen to kid's TV shows. They are easy to understand, simple and fun. Try to avoid grammar during first year and concentrate all your effort on listening and talking. Record one hour program and watch it at least two times. Try to repeat what they are saying and look to their mouth when they are speaking so you can see how to position your lips when you pronounce the words. Kid's songs are also very helpful, they help to train your ears to sound you're not used to listen.

Speak English whenever you can. Practice makes it better. Ask your friend and family to correct your pronunciation. Try to use simple words until your build a good vocabulary. Look for help to learn English, they are always people willing to help you. You can find them in your community: library, churches, and other organizations.



Something I found very helpful is to read aloud at least one page per day and find the meaning of the words that you don't know. When you read aloud you are strengthening the muscles you need to speak your new language. Get a good dictionary that is completely on English. For example, Longman is a great one for ESL students. It brings a CD with the words' pronunciation that is very helpful. Building a good vocabulary would give the tools to understand better.

If you work on your English a little bit every day, you'll see progress. Don't get discourage if you don't see result overnight. It requires to be focus, to be motivate and a lot of effort to learn a second language. It is like seeing a child grow, if you see him everyday you don't notice the changes. After so many years trying to learn English, I can say that my English has improved a lot and I'll keep working on it. Learning a second language is not easy so don't give up and work hard.

My Destination Wedding

Submitted by: Wendell Williams
Tutor: Karen Dobson

My name is Wendell Williams and I am planning a destination wedding for me

and my fiancé. It all began when my fiancé, Carinne, took me to Jamaica for my birthday in October, 2008. One night, after a very romantic dinner, we were strolling along the beach. That's when I asked her, "Honey, would you like to get married in Jamaica?" She said, "That is a very good idea." When we came back the U.S., we told our family and friends that we were planning to have our wedding in Jamaica. They all thought that it was a good idea.

Telling our family about the destination wedding was easy. The hard part started with the actual planning of the wedding. Both Carinne and I have very large families, so it took a lot of work to get the list down to 75 people. My fiancé is very detailed and wants everything to be perfect. She has ordered some beautiful invitations which probably were a fortune. I love her very much so I am okay with the cost because I want her day to be special. We are hoping that everyone will have a great time. The wedding will take place on a Saturday and we have planned activities for our guests for the following Sunday and Monday. After the guests leave, Carinne and I will transfer to another hotel for our 4 day honeymoon.

The wedding will take place on September 19, 2009 in Negril, Jamaica. We are both

very excited and can't wait to get married. I plan on making Carinne very happy and will love her unconditionally for the rest of my life.

My Name is Rумыana

Submitted by: Rумыana Vangelov
Tutor: Julia Nichols

My name is Rумыana. I am from Bulgaria. Now I live in Tampa. I have a sister who lives in Germany. My parents live in Bulgaria. I have a son and daughter. My son lives in Tampa and daughter lives in Rochester.

My Name is Ted

Submitted by: Todor Vangelov
Tutor: Julia Nichols

My name is Ted. I am from Bulgaria. Now I live in Tampa, Florida. I have a son and a daughter. He is 32, she is 19. I have two brothers and one sister. They live in city of Pernik, Bulgaria. I miss beautiful bulgarian cheese and yogurt. I miss bulgarian grape brandy too. But I like US and want to live here. God bless the USA!

My Husband - David

Submitted by: Ya Dong
Tutor: Mary Bergen

My husband - David. He's 45 years old. I met my husband two years ago. He looks very handsome. He's a very nice person. I'm so lucky to find him.

essays

He likes to go fishing, to go camping, to go bowling...Thank God he send him to me. Dave makes me have a complete life.

My Home, China

Submitted by: Angi Zhang
Tutor: Phil Pierre-Saint

Do you want to know where is my home? It's China. It's 5000 years old. it's amazing and interesting. But I'm not going to talk about China's past history. I'm going to talk about China's present.

Before, China was old and dirty. The president didn't care about politics and the Chinese people, he only care about money and wonen. But now all the president are the same.

Now China is new and beautiful. the buildings are new, big and tall. The schools are big and clean. Every body have new clothes and house. They can afford to buy food. In China. 70% of people have computers and 90% have televisions. But China needs a lot more change and many more things. There are some people with no house, no food, no car. Come on, China.

It's not over! I think next I need to talk about my school and my family.

1. My school: It has a big playground, 2 computer

classrooms, 1 art room, 1 science classroom, 2 music classrooms and 1 lunch room. Every Monday we go to the playground and watch the flag raise and every day do exercise. I love my teacher and my classmates.

2. My family: I have a big family. I have 4 aunts and 2 uncles. I have 6 cousins. I'm very happy to have a good family.

It's over. Thank you for checking my work.

A New Life

Submitted by: Anibol Soto
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

We came from Puerto Rico because my wife, Teresa, needed a liver transplant. Her doctor told us to go to Tampa General Hospital. My friend recommended we live in Rocky Creek Village in Tampa.

We arrived on Valentine's Day. My wife had many trips to the hospital for tests and finally the operation came on July 2nd.

Now it is one month after surgery and Teresa has no yellow skin, no yellow eyes and no more itching. Her vision has returned to normal and the pain is gone.

My three children and me are so happy for Teresa. Soon she will return to English Class with me.

My wife calls her liver a baby. It is a new life for her and for me. Thanks to God for giving us new life.

Special Years of My Life

Submitted by: Pablo Maldonado
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

I was born in 1933 in a small central island city of Barranquitas, Puerto Rico.

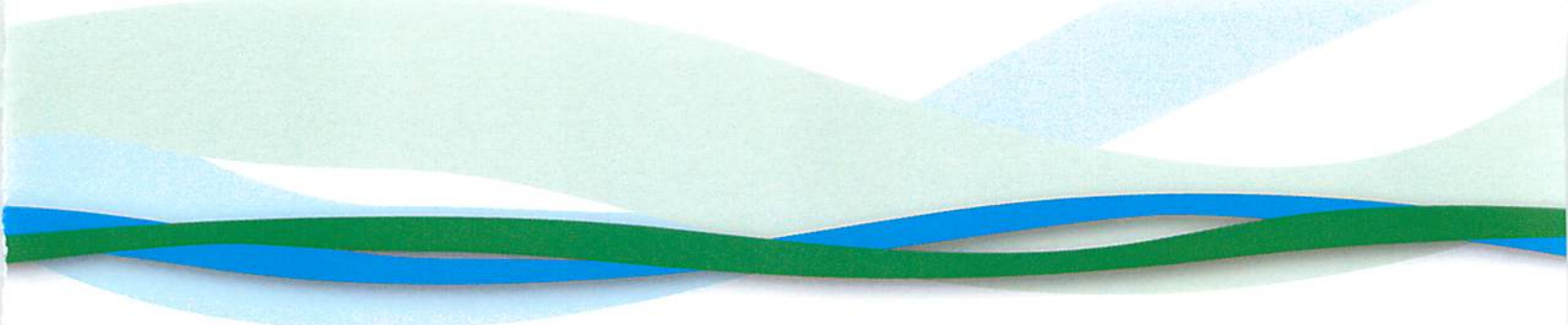
In 1952, I married a very beautiful lady.

In 1954 my first son was born. A year later, we moved to Chicago. Northeast of the city is the beautiful Lake Michigan. Sometimes I used to meditate by the lake. I saw the tall buildings. One was the Sears Tower. I saw the museum and the zoo from the lake also.

In Chicago two more sons were born. Then the family returned to Puerto Rico. We had two sons and one daughter. I took evening classes to finish High School.

In 1976, I studied at the Religious Institute (STEPA) and became a Deacon in my church. I worked in many different communities.

In 2004, the family came to Tampa, Florida. I live with my wife at Rocky Creek Village.



This year my dream is to learn to speak English with competence. Thanks to Sister Marcella's well prepared classes I hope to accomplish my dream.

My Childhood

Submitted by: Myriam Marceles
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

My childhood was beautiful. We were three sisters and three brothers. My sisters and I played with dolls and made dresses. We also organized parties such as for birthdays and weddings.

My father owned and was principal of a High School. My sisters and I made the student's uniforms.

I'm Crafty

Submitted by: Georgina Jimenez
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

As a child I liked to make things. I played with dolls and made them dresses and hats and shoes of cloth. Sometimes I made pajamas to put them to sleep. I had a nice doll house too and I was very happy.

Now I am in my eighties and I am still doing arts and crafts. I make things for other people and donate items for our big Bazaar at Rocky Creek Village. I'm as crafty as ever.

My History

Submitted by: Georgina Jimenez
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

I was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico. I came to New York City in 1953 with my mother, a brother, and a sister. At fifteen I was a baby-sitter. I studied English at 18 years old.

I returned to Puerto Rico in 1968 where I lived for twenty years. Then I came to Tampa, Florida in 1992 and still live here.

I have a daughter and a grandson living here also. One child lives in Puerto Rico and my oldest died a few months ago in New York. I had two girls and one boy. I have seen grandchildren and one great-grand-daughter. This makes me very happy.

The Unexpected

Submitted by: Isabel Acosta
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

I came to this country unexpectedly. In 1965, there was a revolution in the Dominican Republic and because of that; my husband came first. Later I came to join him in New York City with my five children. Then we had two more children. Raising seven kids in New York City was a full time job. All my time was for them and my husband. Even though I had only a fifth grade education,

all my children graduated from college. When my children left home and I became a widow, I got my G.E.D., I learned to drive, and I became a Certified Nursing Assistant. Now I work in St. Joseph's Hospital as a Patient Care Technician. Now I also study E.S.L. to better communicate. Who expected me to get this far.

Animal Talk

Submitted by: Junsung Kim
Tutor: Michele Dorsey

Animals can speak to each other using the same language but people speak different languages.

American pigs cry "Oink Oink" and Korean pigs cry "Ggool Ggool". American cows cry "Moo Moo" and Korean cows cry "Um-me Um-me".

American chickens cry Cockadoodledoo and Korean chicken KooKi-O". American cats cry "Meow Meow" and Korean cats cry "Ya-ong Ya-ong".

American dogs bark "Bow Wow" but Korean dogs bark "Mong Mong". American sheep cry "Baa Baa" and Korean sheep cry "Mea-rr Mea-rr".

American frogs cry "Croak Croak" and Korean frogs cry "Kegool Kegool".

It's very interesting learning about the way animals sound in different countries.



Acknowledgements

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

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