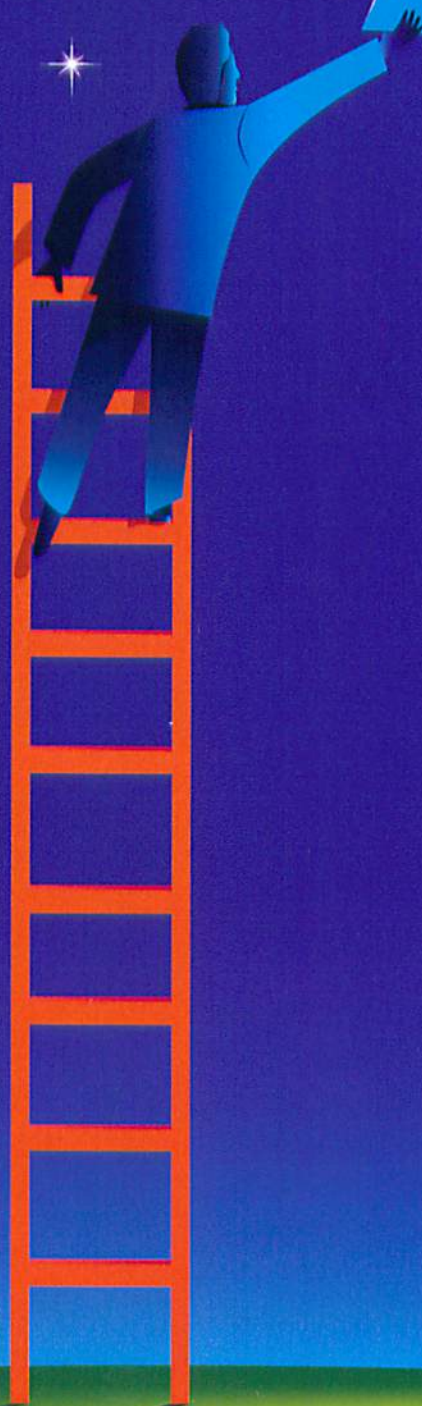


Visions

Essays by New Adult Readers and
Speakers of English as a Second Language
September 2011

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 25 years of service in
Hillsborough County.



HILLSBOROUGH
LITERACY COUNCIL

Teaching Adults to Read and to Speak English

Welcome



From HLC's President

The beautiful part about writing a story is that you can say whatever you want. You can use facts or information to describe a particular event or

situation, or you can compose a collection of thoughts based purely on imagination. Having the interest to contemplate an idea and write it down is a mechanism for sharing information or thoughts with others. By writing and telling your story, whether factual or imagined, you put your mark on the world and help to shape and influence the thoughts of others.

Teaching English-speaking and non-English-speaking adults to read and write unlocks a very important door. The Hillsborough Literacy Council has been committed to this goal for 25 years. What seems different, a quarter century later, is how much more complicated the world has become and as a result, our lives also. This, however, doesn't stop adults from seeking to learn how to read, write, and begin telling their own stories. The Council is helping many individuals to gain these important skills, but the demand is always greater than the volunteers or financial resources. As we forge into the future, we continue to need the community's support and additional volunteer tutors.

I hope you enjoy reading the narratives that fill these pages, and that you and others will be inspired to join our tutor cadre and help bring the next story collection to the future pages of Visions.

Richard Zingale
President, Hillsborough Literacy Council



From the Library Director

Many of our citizens are struggling during these hard economic times. For those who have recently arrived

and are striving to gain skill at speaking English and for those who are attempting to improve or obtain the valuable asset of reading, life seems particularly challenging. To you, the students, who have embraced the established goals set by the Basic Literacy or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs and have met them through hard work and commitment, I offer my sincere congratulations.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Hillsborough Literacy Council's services to Hillsborough County. Today, their mission remains more valuable and life-changing than ever for the citizens of Hillsborough County. Each year's edition of Visions, with its student work and the names of the tutors who encourage them, leaves a lasting positive influence on the reader. So it is with admiration that I share these moving essays of inspiration and success.

Thank you to the Hillsborough Literacy Council, its Board of Directors, its tutors and students. Your dedication and hard work touch not only individuals but the heart of our community.

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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We are pleased to celebrate 25 Years of Success!

Visions

Students have been sharing their stories in the Visions publications since the early 1990s.



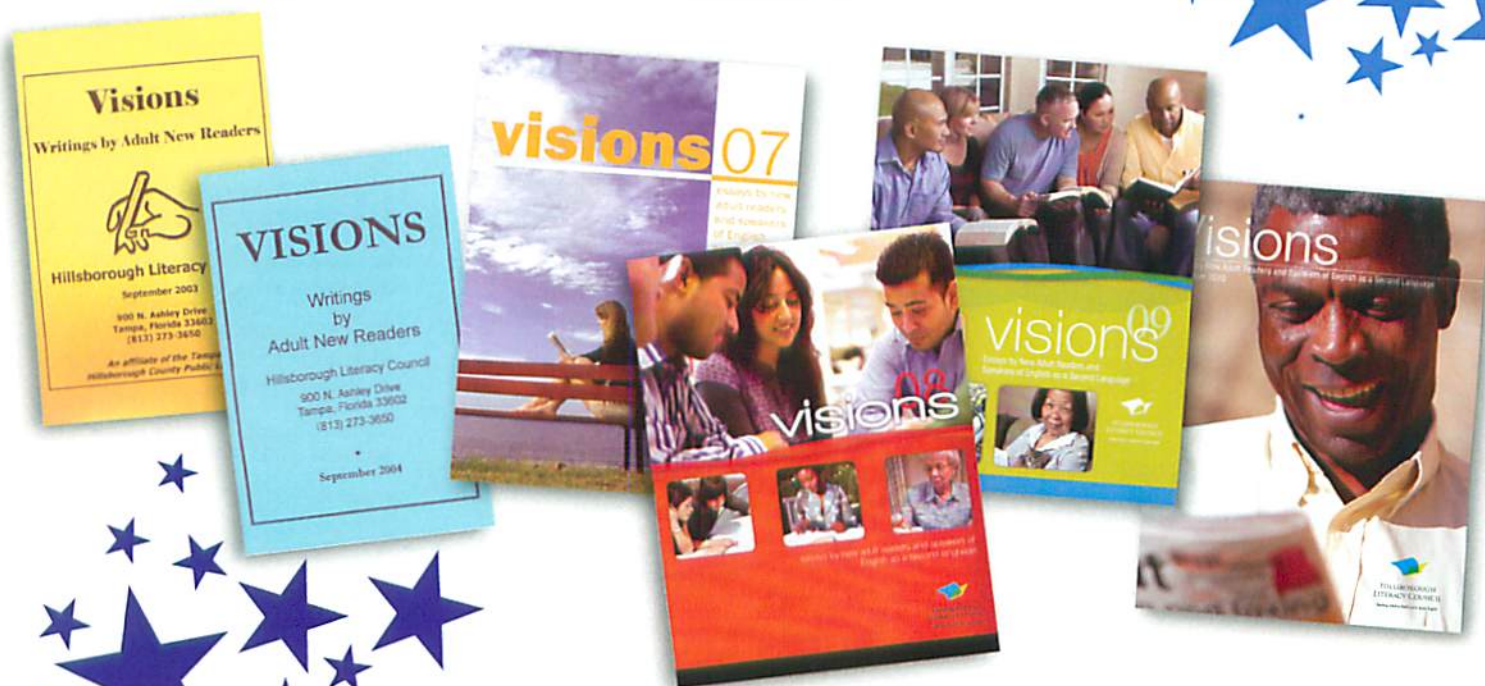
Dedication

Since the Hillsborough Literacy Council began its work in 1986, countless volunteers along with Library Director Joe Stines, library managers and staff, have contributed their time, effort, and energy in getting us to this place today. We thank you for your commitment to the HLC program and congratulate you for your continued efforts to fight illiteracy and language barriers in Hillsborough County.

Did You Know?

The Laubach Method was developed by Frank Laubach, who was missionary to the Philippines. While serving as a missionary, he became a literacy activist.

International Literacy Day is observed annually on September 8.



25 Facts about the Hillsborough Literacy Council

- 1** The first issue of Visions was published in 1993.
- 2** Authors in Residence was a writing contest for new readers at all levels. Each year, the contest would begin in January and conclude in September with the winning essays being published in Visions.
- 3** The 2004 edition of Visions included a recipe for Chicken Canelones submitted by Maria Soledad. The recipe was from her country of Argentina. The dish is prepared on special occasions such as Father's Day and Mother's Day or on Sundays for family gatherings.
- 4** Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) is a member of Volunteers for Adult Literacy in Florida, the Florida Literacy Coalition, and ProLiteracy.
- 5** HLC receives student referrals for the Basic Literacy program through the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.
- 6** Twenty-five percent of HLC's prospective students are from Columbia.
- 7** At least 39 countries are represented by HLC's student population.
- 8** The ten countries most represented by students enrolled in our program are Columbia, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Venezuela, Haiti, and China.
- 9** The majority of HLC tutors (76%) and learners (65%) are female.
- 10** Thirty-four percent of HLC tutors are 60 years of age and over. The majority of HLC tutors (56%) are between the ages of 25 and 59.
- 11** The Hillsborough Literacy Council began as a grant-supported service of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library in 1986 and was originally known as Library Literacy Volunteers of Hillsborough County.
- 12** The first training class for prospective tutors in Hillsborough County was presented by Virginia Gildrie, who was the director of the St. Petersburg Literacy Council in 1986. Approximately fourteen people attended the training session.
- 13** Ellen Hale was the first Literacy Coordinator. She spoke to numerous civic groups and received a great deal of publicity for the program.
- 14** In 1992, Jodi Cohen became HLC's second Literacy Coordinator.
- 15** Founders of the Hillsborough Literacy Council include Dee Blanchard, Geri Bethmann, Sara Appelbaum, Gloria Allen, Virginia Gildrie, and Ellen Hale.
- 16** The first President of the Hillsborough Literacy Council was Gloria Abrams. She had served as a tutor for two years prior to being chosen as President.
- 17** Originally, HLC worked only with English-speaking adults who read below a fifth-grade level. Volunteers Louise Damen and Maria Cristina Montenegro led the effort to add English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to the literacy program.
- 18** HLC's newsletter The Reader was printed from 1987 to 2008.
- 19** Spelldown Hillsborough was a competition and fundraising event for HLC. Businesses in Hillsborough County were invited to a dinner and to participate in a team spelling bee. Many businesses returned each year to participate.
- 20** Celebrity readings were a popular HLC event.
- 21** HLC's service area covers all of Hillsborough County, from Plant City to Sun City Center.
- 22** In 1993, the Council office was moved to the Ybor City Family Learning Center at the Ybor Branch Library. The office was relocated to the John F. Germany Public Library in 2000.
- 23** HLC was a major sponsor of an annual event called the Family Reading Festival.
- 24** HLC's mission has been to teach adults how to read, write and speak English well enough to meet the personal goals of each individual learner.
- 25** Tutors are HLC's most valuable asset.

Did You Know?

In Hillsborough County, 15% of our citizens are functioning at the lowest levels of literacy. That means approximately 120,000 adults in this county read below the fourth grade level and 95,000 adults cannot speak English.

The Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) improves literacy by empowering adults through education in Basic Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Additionally, HLC helps to educate adults in financial and health literacy.

The Institute for Financial Literacy says that financial literacy is the "knowledge and ability to manage one's personal

finance with competence." It is a lifelong process requiring both academic and practical components. Financial literacy includes five standards of managing finances including creating a budget, understanding credit, controlling debt, protecting assets and implementing investment and retirement strategies. The National Financial Capability Study reports that low education groups, low income groups, and young adults are among the highest risk of being financially illiterate.

Health Literacy is the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively in the healthcare environment. This means reading and filling out forms

at the doctor's office, understanding prescription medication labels, and deciding with the doctor the best treatment for an illness. Almost one third of the US population has trouble with these tasks. The elderly, non-reading adults, and non-English speakers are at the highest risk for being illiterate in the health world. People who are health illiterate will spend four times as much money on medical treatments throughout their lifetime, and they have a higher risk of cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

For more information, call HLC at 813-273-3650 or visit our website: hillsboroughliteracy.org

Best Stories

The following "best" stories were selected from past issues of Visions and reflect timeless messages or are just a joy to read.

Lighthouses

Submitted by: Tiss Stevens
Visions, n.d.

Lighthouse - a house with a light on top. The light was put there to help boats find their way along the water. Big rocks could not be seen by the men in the boats so the light was used as a kind of map. The lighthouse was put up as high as possible overlooking the water.

The man who looked after the light was called a lightkeeper. He lived in the lighthouse with his family. His job was to go up the stairs to the top and put something in the light to make it burn all day and all night. He had to make it turn all of the time and fix it if it broke. The light was made of glass with many parts. Most of the lighthouses had lots and lots of stairs, some with more than 300. The lightkeeper had to go up and back two times every day of the week. He was a very hard-working person.

There are a lot of lighthouses in Florida. Let's visit one in a place named Boca Grande. Boca is a non-English word for where your teeth are. Grande is another non-English word for big. It does not read "Big Teeth" or "Big Lips". Shall I tell you the word you're looking for? You may not know the word "mouth". That's where your teeth are, in your mouth. Boca Grande reads "Big Mouth". Boca Grande is a little part of Florida not very far from my home. It is a short drive by car. To get there you must go over a river and, for this, you have to pay \$3.50. You then drive to the end of the road to find the Boca Grande

Lighthouse. It is in a State Park where you can go fishing or sit under a tree and eat your breakfast or lunch.

The lighthouse is very old, going back to 1890. It helped many, many boats find their way. It saved many more from turning over in violent and windy water. In 1966 it was closed and stayed empty for nearly twenty years. People in Boca Grande wanted to fix the lighthouse. They wanted to make it look nice and work again. Thanks to the citizens this happened. The light was turned on again in 1986. There are two houses, one for the light and one for the lighthouse keeper. This lighthouse does not need a keeper but it does have someone who lives in the second house. He works for the park and takes care of the buildings.

I ran up a short flight of stairs to a place where I was able to see water any way I looked. From another place in the lighthouse I went up twelve funny stairs. There I was right up top with the light. It made me very happy to touch the light. Again, I got to see water every way I turned my head. The word "lighthouse" is music to my ears. I love lighthouses!!

Remember, "mouth" is the English word for Boca and "big" the English word for Grande. Boca Grande (Big Mouth) is where I spent a day visiting a lighthouse. It was a visit equal to or better than any other place I've been, before or after. Next time, won't you please come with me? I know you will like my lighthouse.

A Short Story of My Life

Submitted by: Leonard Coleman
Visions, 1997-98

The Bible says that there is a reason and a purpose for everything under the sun. Sometimes I wonder what was my reason for not getting a good education, and where I went wrong.

But I have learned to go forward and achieve a better education. It's really hard to get a job or to bring a family up without an education.

When you can't read the world seems like you're in the darkness. Everyone has to read and do everything for you.

That's why an education is important in one's life. I thank God for the Literacy program because it has brought me out of the darkness to the light, where I can read and write, and understand things better.

I have learned that in order to achieve things in life one must pursue a better education in life.

My Dreams Goals, Hopes and Desires

Submitted by: Carmen Cintron
Visions, September 2002

I was born in the Dominican Republic.

I came to the U.S. When I was twenty one years old, I learned to speak English, but not to write English. That is why I am learning to write in English, and I will soon achieve my goals.

I have more than one goal, and I want to tell you about them. One of my dreams is to own a little business, and I will not stop until I achieve that goal.

Sometimes, I think that it is very crazy to have more than one dream or goal. One of the other dreams I want to achieve is to open a pre-school day care center. I have children of my own and I love taking care of children. This will give me income of my own and I will be doing something that I love.

Another dream I have is to go to school to learn other things that I always dreamed about. I always wanted to be a nurse. When I came to the U.S. I was told that it would be a piece of cake for me to

become a nurse, but when I realized that I could not write in English, all my dreams crashed. Now it is different because I know my dreams and desires can come true.

My studies are making a big difference in my kids life. I know one of the ways I am making that happen is by doing what I'm doing. "Learning English."

I am making a difference because I am helping my kids a lot with their home work and spelling. That for me, is a big difference.

When my daughter Ashley was in school for the first year I could not help her the way I wanted to. That is why it is very important for me to keep learning.

Achieving my goals is very important to me because that is my way of knowing that I am somebody that can make a difference in this world.

Achieving my goals means that I will be a better person because I will read a lot better than now. That will open a big door in my life. I hope I will be a better person tomorrow than I am today.

My True Story

Submitted by: Marjorie John
Visions, September 2003

My parents were in their 40's when I was born. When I went to school they never asked to see my homework. They never read me bedtime stories. I was 14 and in the 6th grade when the school board took me out of school. They said I would never learn to read. So out I went.

I have been in the illiteracy program for a while. It has helped a lot. I'm 60 years old and still learning but the teacher I have has taken time with me. With her help and through the illiteracy program I feel I am on my way. Before this program I could not read and I am grateful for the opportunity they have offered me. It does work and I'm proof that anyone can learn if you try.

Amporn's Metamorphosis

Submitted by: Amporn Dyel
Visions, September 2004

My name is Amporn and I am from Thailand. My name in Thai means Sky. I came to Tampa, FL from Thailand in August 1998. When I came here I knew English only a little. I remember when I went to my sister-in-laws house the first time, they spoke so fast I couldn't understand what they said. I sat down with them and listened to them talk and that made me uncomfortable. I told myself if I knew English better I could make conversation with them. If the telephone rang, I couldn't pick it up because I didn't understand what they said. If I went to the store, I was afraid to talk to anyone.

After that a friend of mine from Japan told me that she went to learn English at a library on Bruce B. Downs. She gave me the address and I went there and met Mr. Morris and he took me into the class. He told me that if you want to learn English you have to practice everyday and not be afraid to try.

Ever since, he has been teaching me English once a week for 2 ½ years and I have learned a lot from him. Now I can speak better with other people, answer the phone, talk with sales people at the stores and even found a job. He is a very good teacher. I know I still have a lot to learn, because English is very difficult to learn. That is my story.

My Story is Called Bluffing

Submitted by: L.
Visions, September 2004

Bluffing hurts when you do it. It only hurts when you know what it is. It is something that will make you feel like you are having a heart attack or anxiety attack. It makes you feel like you are having the worst thing happening to you. During your life, you worry all the time. Mine has lasted for 47 years. Because you live like this, it never stops. It still goes on now. People never know, but you do know. We need help. It happens all the time and it hurts. It is a lie that you live all the time. You could lose your job because they found out about this. I have had the same job for over thirty years. It is very hard to do this. I know because I happen to be a senior manager.

A book is something that you need to be able to read and you must be able to write. One day, I will, but it is a hard thing to do now. I know that I'm not the only one who lives like this in the work force.

I Try

Submitted by: Edgar Rubiano
Tutor: Sister Mary Gregoria Rush
Visions, September 2008

After living in Tampa four years, learning the English language is slow for me. Watching, listening and speaking is very complex. However, with the help of instructors, teachers and friends I try. In my opinion the better way to learn is to exercise every day, with the family and community and to have a lot of time for reading out loud for one hour to get new vocabulary.

Animal Talk

Submitted by: Junsung Kim
Tutor: Michele Dorsey
Visions, September 2009

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.

2011 Stories

Something about me

Submitted by: Georgina Jimenez
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

When I left Puerto Rico and came to New York City, I was 15 years old. At that time my mother didn't know what to do because we didn't have a place to live. My father was living in a small room. My sister's neighbor helped us find another room. That way my siblings and I had a place until my mother found an apartment for all of us.

Later on I became a baby sitter for my sister, brother and two other toddlers. Then after a year I began working in a factory where I put flowers on hats.

At that time you had to have working papers that your parents had to sign. After that I worked in many different places and held different jobs.

At age 21 I got married and had three children; two daughters and one son. Years later they got married. One of my daughters has four girls and one boy. My son has a boy and a girl.

Now I live alone in a Senior Village. This is only part of my life. Maybe someday I will write something about my family and my friends.

My Time Machine

Submitted by: Erica Velazquez
Tutor: Carol Godwin

This story is about a woman who was lost since she was a little girl. She found two people who helped her find her way. The way she was lost was that she couldn't read or write. Only a handful of people knew. She was so ashamed. She hated telling people, so she tried not to. If she tried to tell people, they didn't believe her at first because she hid her secret so well. She had never wanted to be like anyone else. She didn't believe that she was

better than anyone-she just liked being different. There was one way that she would have liked to be like other people. She wanted to read and write like them.

The day that written words talked to her and meant something was one of the happiest days of her life. The day she picked up her very first book she walked into her own Time Machine. She traveled the world in the past and in the future. Because of this she finished high school (not GED). Now she is wowed by books.

Before her "thing" was movies because she couldn't read. One of her favorite movies was *The Secret Garden*. She had watched all the versions of it. But the first time she read the book *The Secret Garden* she was amazed. She knew that she had been missing something, but not how much. She got in her Time Machine and went to Yorkshire, England, and spent time with Mary Lennox, Dickon, and Colin in the garden. She got to hang out with Anne of Green Gables and she got to go to Switzerland where she met Heidi and Grandfather on the mountain. She got to spend some time with Lewis and Clark in St Louis and on the Missouri River. That's where she met the Native Americans of 1804 and where she got to know Sacajawea.

"Wow!" she kept saying after reading different kinds of books. (Reading is like getting a pair of new glasses that you knew you needed but you didn't know they would change your life so much for the better. She doesn't wear glasses, but she has heard other people say that the world looks so different and they didn't know what they were missing.) The best thing about her travels in the Time Machine is the low cost of travel and if she doesn't like where she is and she just wants to come home, she can just close the book. She has never physically left the United States, but in a book, she can.

My Life Changing Experience in Tampa

Submitted by: Melissa Velázquez-Figueroa
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

All of my life, I have lived through a lot of experiences where I have seen God's work. He had been preparing me to be able to live through yet another experience of his love.

It was July 14, 2010 when I departed from my beautiful Puerto Rico to come to Tampa, FL. Here, I would be living with Ada, my mother-in-law, where we would wait for her to be called to receive her liver transplant. During this stay, and while we were waiting for this call, God allowed me to meet wonderful people that God would use to give us strength through their words and to help us on our journey. Every day, while I was reading God's word in the Bible, He would prepare me even more. He would put words of strength for other persons, and every day, He would prove to me His blessings with each passing moment.

On September 22, 2010 we received the long awaited call; and on the next morning, God gave Ada the best gift of all; a gift of life, a new liver. God also, in that moment, gave a gift to me; the gift of being able to be a witness of how a person is born again. Everything was happening very quickly, but while they were preparing Ada, I could see God close to her bed, holding her hand; while, through a hug from one of the nurses, He was telling me: "Everything will be alright".

Some time has passed after that, and whenever I see Ada, I see the miracles of love and life. The opportunity to be with her, from the beginning up to this moment, has been one of the experiences that I will never forget the rest of my life. I have listened to many people speak bad things about their mothers-in-law. For me, the

opportunity to be with her, to take care of her, to see her progress and improvement, but especially, be a witness of her return to life by receiving that gift and miracle of life, is an extremely wonderful experience.

I thank God for the gift of having a mother-in-law that is so strong person and such a fighter. She didn't let this all this process her down at any. I thank Him for the opportunity of allowing me to be next to her all this time. Thanks to God for allowing me to go through this experience that has been one of the many blessings I have received during my life!

A Hope of Life

Submitted by: Ada E. Rojas-Vázquez
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

It never occurred to me that I would live in the company of my daughter-in-law. Even less it occurred to me that I would have to depend on her. For me, this situation was incomprehensible and I had a lot of mixed feelings, because I have always been independent, on the ready and strong woman. I have always given the best of me to the people that need me, with all my heart.

On July 14, 2010, we arrived in Tampa, but this time we were determined to reside here to achieve a possible liver transplant that could save my life. Once established, we started adjusting one to the other. Melissa is a happy and vivacious young woman with a great heart. She is hard-working, decisive and has great persistence to achieve her goals. From the very beginning, I could observe that, in many things, she was very similar to me, though I am very formal and serious. We have lived through a lot of experiences that have made us grow to be better human beings.

I will always remember that on August 23, 2010, when my name was added on the waiting list for a transplant, my daughter-in-law said to me: "I declare by faith in the name of Jesus, that they will call you soon for the transplant." I trusted too, in the all-powerful God who has always given me the strength to walk forward feeling the power of His presence. One month passes and on September 23, 2010, I received my

liver transplant; and a new opportunity to live.

On the way back to our house, after the transplant, I made a promise to myself to live and enjoy every moment of my life minute by minute. I tried to share that promise with every person that spoke with me, and told them that, with the help of God and having Him always as my guide, it would be always that way.

Days went by, bringing sad and happy moments, as happens sometimes to all of us in every way of life, where we are confronted with reality every day. In a support group gathering for patients of different conditions and ailments, I remember that as part of a religious service, we had the opportunity to hug each other. At that moment, I told my daughter-in-law: "I love you". By saying those words, I also meant: "I appreciate your effort. Thanks for your support.", and many other things that I didn't communicate at that time.

Today, I have many goals to fulfill, but one of the most important is to help support the Organ Transplant Program that is so necessary to give other people the opportunity to continue living. I am very grateful for the opportunity that life has given me and the contribution of all the persons who have supported me along this way. I am especially grateful of my daughter-in-law, because with the passage of time, she has become someone much more significant to me; she has become a dear friend of mine. Following the path life presented before us, and trusting God, we both received a new hope of a new life.

The Importance of speaking English

Submitted by: Belkis C. Altas
Tutor: Julia Nichols

My name is Belkis. I've been in the US for the past 3 years. Fortunately, I got to learn English a little bit in my country before moved here.

One of my dreams is to speak English very well, because I know how important it is.

When you get to speak English very well, you have a lot of opportunities to find a good job and have better communication with the people from this country. I know that in the future my English will be better because I'm working on it.

It's very important that you don't be afraid when you speak it. It doesn't matter how you do, the most important thing is to try to improve your language every day.

You can reach your goal, all of you need is to be persistent with your dreams.

My goal for the future is to speak, read and write English very well. To get this goal, I know that I have to work hard and never stop.

I want to thank this institution for the great opportunity they give to people from different countries to study English and the same time teaching us about the important to study the God's word.

Visiting the Dominican Republic

Submitted by: Claudia Hernandez
Tutor: Mary Bergen

The Dominican is located on the Island of Hispaniola. The Island is share by two countries, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. They are many interesting places to visit in the Dominican Republic among them the Capital, Punta Cana and Samana.

The capital, Santo Domingo,, was Spain's first capital in the new world. In Santo omingo stands the first University, Cathedral, and castle of the American Continent. The capital has also many museums, attractions and restaurants.

Punta Cana is in the municipal district La Altagria. In Punta Cana are some of the best beaches of the Caribbean. The resorts in Punta Cana are beautifully design and have activities for kids and adults.

Samana is another beach town, which biggest attraction is that during the month of January, February and March Humpback whales go to breed to Samana's warm water and they can be seen along the coast.

The Dominican Republic weather is warm through out the year, the average temperature is 78 to 80° F. If you want to

know more about first American's City or want to relax at the beach visiti Dominican Republic on your next vacation.

this is about my life

Submitted by: Alejandro E. Lemeni
Tutor: Mary Bergen

I was born in 1941 in Mexico D.F. then I wait until the year of 1957 to go away from Mexico to go to San Fracisco to found my father because he live in San Fracisco then I life iwth my father in apartment and then I going to look for enroll in the shool to learn my english then I look for a job because I need to work to help my father. I delivery some newspaper in San Fracisco in different places in the town. I live in San Fracisco about almost five year then 1962 I left to Puerto Rico to found my mother then I life in PR from 1962 to 1998 almost 36 years. now I life in Florida in VALRico with my mother.

An Unforgettable Trip

Submitted by: Isabel Acosta
Tutor: Sister Marcella Kiesel

In June 2009 my eldest daughter's mother-in-law celebrated her 80th birthday. The family decided to celebrate by taking a Caribbean cruise. The trip included stops in Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Belize, Cozumel and Haiti.

We were a group of eleven travelers among which were my grandchildren Jaclyn, Christopher and Damara. I wanted to do something special with them that they would always remember.

The occasion arose when in Haiti, that my daughter Isabel and I where able to ride a zip line ride that slid from 5000 feet down to the beach and was very exciting. Then on the same beach my grandson Christopher and I reaced almost 90 miles per hour on the Jet-Ski. It was wonderful to hear my grandson say, "Grandma this is awesome."

My granddaughter, Jaclyn and I went to the 70's disco night party on the ship. It was a great time for us to spend together having a lot of fun. We wore our disco glasses and took many pictures of the two of us have a great time dancing. My

granddaughter, Damara, and I had a great time hanging out at the beach.

He was born and raised in Spanish Harlem in New York City in the forties and fifties. From a middle class Puerto Rican family she developed a personality that makes her unique. It is always pleasant to be with her and we all love her a lot. God bless her always.

Finally I believe that being with my grandchildren and the rest of the family on this event, was wonderful and makes me think how important it is to enjoy each others company and appreciate our time together. I think this made the trip unforgettable.

No Title

Submitted by: Jesus Omana
Tutor: Julia Nichols

Hi, my name is Jesus Omaña, I am from Mexico and one of my dreams was to come to America and I did. My wife Rocio and I had been here for over seven years were God has showing ous his blessing in many, many ways. One of them is our childrens were god has bless and fortify the trust in Him.

My family and I have been through a lot difficult times through all these years, but God never left us.

God has been our foundation and Love to keep the Family in his love and blessings.

My True Story

Submitted by: Emmanuela Long
Tutor: Flo Stein

When I was young my mother had died. The worst dream is finding someone to help me. At the age of 22 years I met a man I can do my life with and I love it. We got engaged and arranged the paper work and the first time I have come to the United States.

I lived an amazing time full of joy, meeting people, speaking with people; going to the movies together.

I was so excited I couldn't believe I was going to realize my dream. I knew deep inside this experience would change my

life, and it did. I say thank you good he changed my life too.

And this is my story.

My wonderful blessing's

Submitted by: Rocio Omana
Tutor: Julia Nichols

Hi!. My name is Rocio Omana. I came from Mexico and I lived for six years in Brandon with my husband and my two son Alain and Jessie. Alain Born in México. He came when he was two years old. Alain speak more English than spanish, Jessie speak both lenguaje. I think the english is very important because my kids are in the school an they need help for their homework.

In this country I found many blessings and opportunity fo rme and for my family.

I knew Jesuscrisl like my savior and my kids grow up to know Jesus too.

I take English class at Bell Shoals Baptist Church and every Sunday attend in this Church with my family.

In this Church I knew Mrs. Mary, Ms. megan, Ms Julie an Ms Wendy they are wonderful ladies, they teach me a lot of English. In my house my kids teach me the correct pronounciation. I need to thank God for my childrens, my husband and for every person who is a blessings for us.

INTERESTING AND VERY GOOD PEOPLE

Submitted by: Camilo Polania
Tutor: Julia Nichols

When I arrived to United States to know the diferent cities and be with my family, they were talking to me about the people in the church Bell Shoals and they told me that people are very nice and religious people with very big heart. I was in the bible class and in the service, I has the opportunity for meeting that very good and nice people. After that I had the choice for taking the English class which I was going to and found very good people with very big heart and very nice human power.

Unfortunately I couldn't go to the english class many times because I had to continue traveling to others cities but in other occasion I'm gonna come back. I'm very grateful to the Bell Shoals people, very good and nice people.

Don't Get It Twisted

Submitted by: Eugene Paxton
Tutor: Flo Stein

From my head through my mouth and through her hand. These are my words, but my wife is writing them because I am out of town working.

When I joined the Literacy Program, it was scary for me at my age to start learning to read and speak properly. I learned it was more fun to read words I never knew before. But do not get it twisted, I am not where I want to be yet.

My teacher is very patient with me and she must have a heart of gold to take her free time to spend with me. My teacher's name is Mrs. Flo Stein. She also got me interested in computers.

My wife tells me she is very proud of me but do not get it twisted. Maybe I'll be smarter than the person I stand beside one day.

My teacher tells me she will not give up on me until I graduate. Don't get it twisted, I will keep on going.

So I close with thanks to everyone in the program. And please don't get it twisted.

My Granddaughter's Sleepover

Submitted by: Paulette Dibbs
Tutor: Sue O'Neal

Yesterday my little granddaughter, Elana who is three decided to spend the night at my house. My daughter brought her over to have dinner and spend some time with me. I was very glad to have her over. She surprised me when she told me she wanted to spend the night and watch Sponge Bob. I could tell she was excited at the idea and that also made me happy.

We had fun watching cartoons together and after a while she fell asleep and then I put her to bed.

I love my granddaughter very much and look forward to more nights watching cartoons with her.

I have two other grand kids. A girl and a boy. The girl is Sarah and the boy is Micky. Sarah is four and Micky is one. Sarah likes to go to school and she likes ballet and gymnastics. Micky likes to fix stuff with his dad. He enjoys playing the piano. I love all my grandchildren. They mean a lot to me.

My Story

Submitted by: Jalynn Thomas
Tutor: Flo Stein

My name is Jalynn Thomas. I am bipolar and on daily medication so my early education was limited.

Thanks to the state of Florida and my one on one teaching from Flo Stein, I have increased my reading and writing skills greatly. I now feel very good about myself than I have been in years.

It's called self-confidence.

My thanks to everyone.

Keeping your dog after your baby is born

Submitted by: Maria Pinzon
Tutor: Pattie Walker

Pets are considered the best friend of the human being. If you had a dog before you got pregnant there is no reason to think you have to give him away because your baby is coming. That is what I think about my dog, Tebow. A lot of people usually worry about pets around babies and of course there are good reasons to worry about that. Dogs can get aggressive or they cannot be used to have a little person around them and hurt the baby without understanding what they did.

At the same time there are many benefits when you have your dog around your baby. In the first year, if your baby is around a dog there are fewer possibilities that your baby develops allergies in the future. Your dog can help your baby to enhance their social skills when they go to preschool. Dogs can make your child become more cooperative and share with other people, and other

things like learn to care and nurture others, develop a sense of responsibility, establish a daily exercise routine and develop friendships.

Your dog has been a member of your household since he was a puppy or you adopted him, so you have to consider that you cannot throw him away. You have to work out the way you are going to make your new baby welcome to your house by your dog, and make sure that the relationship between all the members of the family works perfectly. Of course you need to be responsible and careful; remember that most dogs adapt quickly and easily to the presence of a new baby. However, since the consequences can be so serious, assume that your dog will react negatively and take every safety precaution possible, regardless how your dog has reacted in previous encounters with babies.

Right now I'm getting ready to the arrival of my baby girl Isabella. I'm sure I'm going to do all it is possible to keep my dog Tebow with us, so she can enjoy the opportunity to grow up around the wonderful company of our best friend Tebow.

Waiting for my husband and son

Submitted by: Vivian Figueroa
Tutor: Ashley Ray

It's morning, my favorite time of day in Tampa. The city is waking up and I am too. I'm sitting in a small coffee shop. Outside, the weather is gloomy. It's cloudy, but isn't raining. Two people are waiting at the bus stop. The woman is angry. She is pointing to her watch. She's complaining to the man next to her. He isn't listening. He is reading his newspaper. A couple is sitting on a bench. They're about 25. The woman is wearing a waitress uniform. The man is wearing a bus driver's uniform. They aren't talking. They are just holding hands and smiling at each other. I am sure they are in love. Another couple is standing near them. They are both about 40. They are married I am sure. Are they fighting? Maybe. The woman is looking at the young couple. Perhaps she is thinking about happier times.

Acknowledgements

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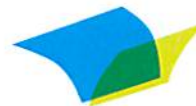


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