



HILLSBOROUGH LITERACY COUNCIL

Visions Retrospective

Stories by New Adult Readers
and English Language Learners

2020

Message From the Hillsborough Literacy Council President

Dear Friends,

We are excited to share with you this special retrospective issue of Visions. In a year in which the world has dramatically changed, one thing that has remained the same is the connection that Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) students and volunteers build through literacy. Whether poring through written texts in one-on-one tutoring or practicing speaking in Conversation Corners, the skills learned in HLC programs allow people to connect to each other and the broader community.

Since we cannot connect in the same ways we have in years past, the HLC Board decided this would be a good time for the HLC community to look back at submissions from past issues of Visions along with some new works by current students. It is our hope that this issue will reconnect us all to our mission of improving adult literacy, and to each other. We are so grateful to each and every student, volunteer, board member and staff member who has connected with HLC through the years. We are also thankful for the Hillsborough County Library, our donors, and our sponsors for helping build these connections.

While it will be a challenge to adapt our program to connect in this new era, our students and tutors can tackle a challenge. It is a challenge to learn to read for the first time as an adult or in a second language. It is a challenge to teach someone else to read. Yet, HLC students and tutors rise to the challenge everyday! So, I challenge you to continue to build your connections as students, teachers, and supporters of Hillsborough Literacy Council.



Brandi Meredith
HLC President

Message From the Library Director

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.”

Frederick Douglass

Basic literacy is now, and will always be, the most important tool you can have for success. 2020 has proven to be a year of great change and adversity. Who would have predicted the effects of COVID-19 on our culture - wide-spread closures, social distancing, and the rise of self-service-online everything? The ability to read effectively is more important now more than ever before. The progress you are making toward adult basic literacy will allow you to participate in the modern digital culture and our increasingly digital workforce.

“Reading, literacy and learning are fundamentally important to establishing strong and stable democracies. Visit your local public library and expand your mind.”

Jennifer Ritchie Payette

The library’s mission is to promote lifelong learning for all. This mission truly comes to life when these programs are in motion! I would like to congratulate all of the students for recognizing the importance of literacy in their lives and having the courage to seek help with basic written and spoken English. Their efforts are remarkable and their stories here in the pages of Visions are truly inspiring. I would like to share my gratitude for the hard work and dedication of the students, tutors and Board members of the Hillsborough Literacy Council for committing to improve the lives of our citizens and the prosperity of our community. Your example serves as inspiration to all who would help others succeed.

“Frederick Douglass taught that literacy is the path from slavery to freedom. There are many kinds of slavery and many kinds of freedom, but reading is still the path.”

Carl Sagan



Andrew Breidenbaugh
Library Director

The Hillsborough Literacy Council info

The Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) is a nonprofit affiliate of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library teaching functionally and marginally illiterate adults to read and write through its Adult Basic Literacy program. In its English for Speakers of Other Languages program, participants learn to read, write and communicate in basic English. HLC accepts adults 18 and over. Depending upon the student's level, learning to read can take a year or more. HLC needs volunteer tutors and will provide them training and materials. We ask our tutors to commit to one year's work with their student(s).

HLC seeks funding partners and donations which will directly support the program by providing student materials and supplies for tutor trainings. For more information, visit hillsboroughliteracy.org or call (813) 273-3650.

Note from the Editor

2020 has been a year none of us expected. It saw the total shut down of the institutions and services upon which we depend at the HLC. For this reason, we were unable to produce Visions 2020 in the same way we would in other years. Due to an inability to collect a sufficient amount of new writing, this year readers will see some new pieces along with writings from previous issues. Included with the writings are some teaching tips and pointers for ways that tutors can use Visions in their tutoring efforts in the future.

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The Hillsborough Literacy Council supports our tutors who graciously volunteer to help students develop strategies and techniques for reading and comprehension. It is a lifelong learning process and our students excel in their dedication to participate in the process. The following are stories written by our current students. The stories have been printed in the exact manner in which the students have written them. Please enjoy and learn about our amazing students through their stories.

New Stories

THE EMOTIONS

By: Ernesto Milan

I suppose that the organism of the human being functions through feelings and emotions that are produced like reaction of the individual in front of the environment.

Ever since the birth the human beings respond in view of the hardships that demands his organism.

At first the food, the cold, the warm and hot, be satisfy by the older persons that take care of the baby until this person can soothe his necessities by himself. It produces then functional circuit in the organism by means of each other make a reaction for every necessity.

In view of appearance of the necessities, emerge the impulses in the internal ego that go to satisfy on the external world, it can result positive or negative.

At this point gave origin to the feeling that goes to have the same tonality of the received answer.

Arise then positive senses like Euphoria, Happiness, Satisfaction the well-being or negatives senses like anger, affliction or sorrow, sadness, the hate, frustration or the boredom, and so on.

All these emotions come back to the external world like manifestation of behavior of the human being - Those is that we see on the human relation with the other persons like behavior that are own of every person.

The main part of these conducts are lead to the other persons witch one remain with relation.

Alien behavior to this two trending take away to the person to one sense of solitude or individualism which can be evaluate like self - esteem or selfishness.

The relation of the ego with the other persons we can refer like trend of to be with other or to be for other.

The first lead us to the association which other persons, the organization

- **Titles can be interesting! Try browsing Visions in the archive by reading only titles and predicting what the pieces are about, then read the ones that interest you. Where you correctly able to guess what they were about?**
- **Give a student an essay without the title and have them generate some potential titles for the piece themselves. Discuss why they chose those titles, and then take a look at the actual title.**

Of school groups, the citizen life, the professional activities and others with which we make up our permanent coexistence. This is the dynamic of our social life.

The trend of to be for the other has like condition the evaluation of the other person, which we can consider like “LOVE”, individual feeling that it can be sexual love, erotic love or human love.

The sexual love makes conduction to the relation between two persons for the satisfaction of your reciprocal necessities through the sex. The man in this aspect practice different behaviors that demonstrate the personal satisfaction of each.

The erotic love we conduce to a relation with the other person for to be satisfied the sexual impulses but in search the transcendence of love in the search of the continuance of the ego in the world. This relation leads always to the trend of the sexual relation with expectance to the creation of new beings.

Appear then the strengthening of the family like symbol of the erotic love through the marriage or eternal union of two persons that constitute the family.

The human love is the symbol of the permanent relation of the ego with other individuals. This relation is always too dynamics. The teacher with his pupils the father with his children, the king with your subject, etc. make the dynamic of these feelings that in the social life are effectives.

Hello:

My name is Gloria Fry.

I arrived in the United States on January 7, 2016 with my American boyfriend. I went for trips with my boyfriend and sisters, knowing beautiful places in this city of Tampa Florida. After some months my boyfriend and I promised to get married.

Since then my life has changed in every way. We started the papers for my permanent residence, which was approved in December 2016. In the meantime I went to know several places in the United States. In May of 2018, we went to Italy to meet my husband's family. In September of 2019, I started to do the papers for U.S. Citizenship and, finally on February 20, 2020, celebrated the Naturalization Ceremony.

Now...I'm an American Citizen.



A Newcomer's Confidence

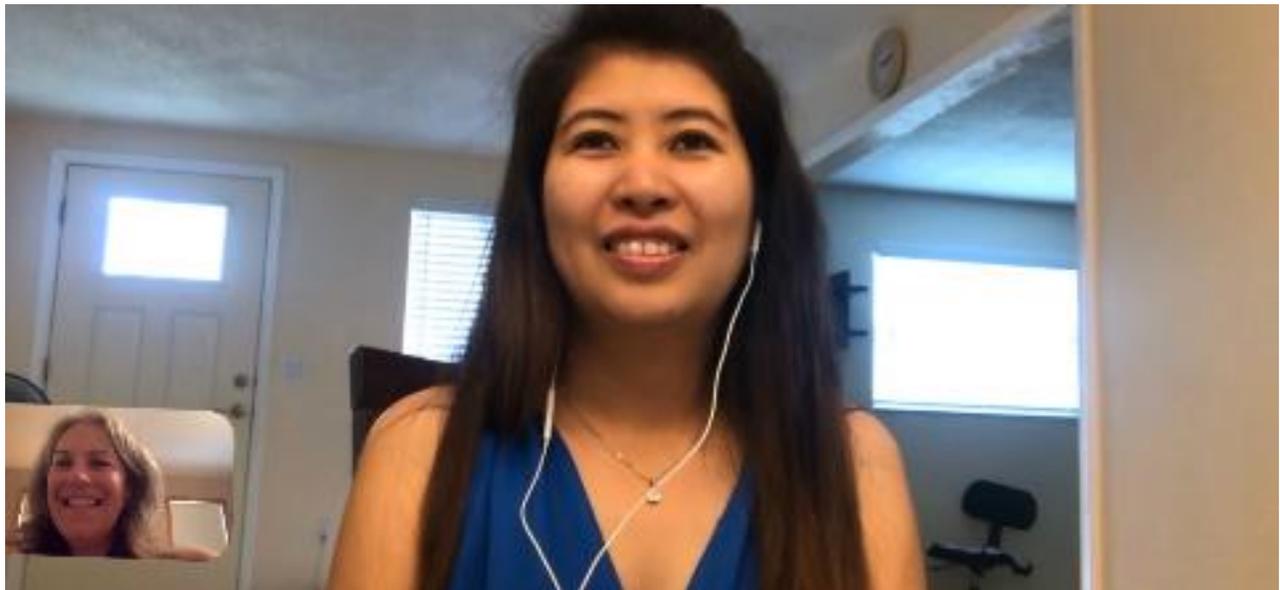
By: Tram Truong

Everyone's life is a long story, and my life is, too. After I came to the United States, I felt excited, because I have a lot of new interesting things that I can discover.

The first days I came here, I realized the citizens obey traffic rules perfectly when they drive cars. I liked it very much and admired that. Then I practiced driving a car with my brother's guidance. I tried to get a license. But the first time I failed. The next time I failed, too. I felt so sad. Driving is difficult for me, a Vietnamese middle-aged woman. But it is easy for citizens of the USA. When I was in Vietnam, I could ride motorcycles, but I could not drive a car. I just sat in the passenger seat in the car.

And after more trying, now I have a license. I can drive a car to go to the market, take my daughter to school, go shopping on the weekend, and I can do everything that I like.

Now I feel happier in the United States.





"On March 10th Wilson Osorio, a student in the Hillsborough County ESOL program passed his citizenship test.

Wilson is of Colombian descent and currently works as a construction electrician.

We are anxiously awaiting the lifting of the Coronavirus restrictions so that the citizenship ceremony can be held and Wilson officially becomes a citizen. “

From left to right:
Maria, Wilson, Judy Manowitz

What Time Is It? It's MY Time!

By: Anonymous

It's time that I stop worrying about what people think.

It's time to start living in the way that frees my inner me.

It's time that I go after what I want and live with no regrets.

It's time that I stop being afraid of what they may see when I speak.

It's time that I stop letting people and circumstances tell me who I should be.

It's time that I become bold as a lion,

Like my God expects me to be!

It's time.

It's time to be all God created me to be.

(Inspired by Proverbs 28:1)

Previous Stories

1993: COMING TO AMERICA

By: Judy Ablaro

I am from the Philippines and grew up there. My father died when I was two months old, and my mother was mother and father to seven kids - five girls and two boys.

I lived with my Mom when I was in kindergarten, but sometimes I lived with my aunt or my cousin, because my Mom lived on a farm and school was far away. When I lived with my aunt I had to clean the house before I went to school. Every time I went to school I was always late. My Mom told me to go home because of how my aunt was treating me. My Mom didn't make me go to school because it was far away from where we lived. I quit school in third grade. I was a kid and I didn't want to go to school - I'd rather play. And the teacher would pinch us on our ears and legs.

I remember my teacher told me. I was good in math. I was a good student. I know how to read a little bit when I was a little kid, but when I grew up it was just forgotten.

I was a problem kid. I had to fight back. My mother said, "If you cry, I'll spank you". That's the way parents are in the Philippines. Mothers are always very strict. They teach children respect and discipline. Children have to stay in their bedroom. with their parents' friends come to the house. That's the way children are raised in the Philippines.

We had some superstitions in the Philippines that Americans don't believe, just like you have some superstitions in America that we don't believe. This is one of the things we believe: Pearls come from the sea and can bring you good luck or bad luck, just like the tide can go up and down. You are not supposed to buy pearls for yourself. That's bad luck. Pearls are supposed to be a gift from someone else. Many Philipinos who grew up in the Philippines believe that. I don't own any pearls.

Also, you don't give your shoes to your friend - that's bad luck also. You and her are not going to get along. You have to give her some money without her knowing it. Then you won't get into an argument with her.

It is also bad luck to give your handkerchief to your boyfriend. That means it will bring you to tears.

There were a lot of weird things when I was growing up in the Philippines. We believe in voodooos and fortune telling and that kind of thing.

When I was growing up I never went to the doctor or the hospital or got any shots until I got to the United States. My Mom took care of me. We ran around with no shoes all the time and

we would get athlete's foot because of all the rain. My mother would make medicine from a different kind of red plant that grows Philip-pines and put it on our feet. About three days later the athlete's foot would go away. There are different plants to make you well if you are sick with a high fever. If we were sick with a bad cold and coughing, my mother cut sugar cane or lemon in half and put something on it, and she would leave it outside all night, from

- This Author talks about superstitions, what superstitions do people have in your student's country or culture?
- How do people decide to get married where your student is from?

Tutors and students can talk about these topics before reading this article, then, the student can write about them after reading.

6:00 at night until 6:00 the next morning. At 6 in the morning you'd have to eat it. It tastes terrible, but then your cold is gone the next day.

I was the youngest in the family and the only one who hadn't gotten married yet. My mom forced me to marry. It's a family tradition in the Philippines. If you parents have a friend and she has a son you get married at 18, whether you like it or not. It's the old fashioned way.

My brother was in the Navy. I met a friend of his - Mr. Nice Guy- He was an American. They were on the same ship together. My brother's friend liked me. I was 17 years old. He talked to my Mom and asked to marry me.

So I got married. He was in love with me. I didn't want to be married. I wasn't ready for marriage. I wasn't ready for no husband at all. But sometimes you have no choice. Maybe you'll get a a good future with him and things will be better for you.

When I came to America I had only my purse in my hand. I had no suitcase with me. I thought over here everybody was rich and I could buy lots of nice things. When I got here and went to our apartment I was very disappointed. Our apartment looked looked very poor. I thought in America you didn't have to work to make money. I turned 18 here and went to work at 19.

In the Philippines our language was Tagalog. I couldn't speak any English. I didn't understand my husband at all. When I cam to America my husband put me in adult high school for three months to learn English.

Now that I'm older I regret that I didn't go to school. I'm getting older and don't know how to read, but I'm doing something about it. When I learn how to read I'm going back to school and get my GED. Maybe I'll take a few years in college if I learn very well. I am practicing typing and would like to work with computers.

1994 :MY PARENTS

By: Susan Sayadian

I think of my parents. I remember my parents did hard work. I had very good parents. When I think of my father, he was a nice and quiet man. Also, he never bothered anybody. He was a driver man and people respected him. He was 20 years older than my mother and he loved my mother so much. He died almost 11 years ago. I have good memories of him. I always think of my mother. She was a very nice woman and kind. Also, she was very close to me. If she had a secret or she was sad and needed help, she talked to me, not anyone else, even my sisters or brothers.

I remember she did lots of things for us because my father didn't help at home. I have two brothers and two sisters, but I helped her more than them.

She always told me "If I didn't have you, what can I do?" We were always together - to go out, shop, party, and travel. We were happy together. When I married, she was happy for me, but missed me so much. After I have been one year here, when she was crossing the street, a cab hit her and a few minutes, she died. I always have good memories of her and I miss her a lot. She is always with me.

1995: Hungry to Learn

By: Leonard Coleman

My school days were good, but I didn't take advantage of them. I wasn't hungry to learn like I am now. When I was in the third grade I pass and went to the fourth grade not really learning as much as I should have in school. School days were good, but my mind wasn't on school, it was on working and making money. I went to the fifth grade, and was learning more

about math and English, but it was hard to read and no one in my family could help me with my home work. My mother could not read and my father worked all time. I was shy and afraid to asked anyone to help me, but my family. I was wrong to do that. I was afraid that people might laugh at me and call me a dummy. As I grew up I did just enough to pass in school- not really learning what I should have. But I didn't know the importance of an education. I went on with my life going to school. I passed again and went to sixth grade, and I began to work and miss school. We were poor and we needed money, so I began to miss school more and more and work. Soon I wanted to work all the time but my mom made me go back to school again. At this time I was ashamed of my education, I was ashamed that I didn't learn to read good enough. Now I'm thankful for this reading program that I have a chance to learn again, and be a part of this society moving in the right direction.

1996: Tampa in the 1930s

By: Gloria Roberts

- **Before reading this story, think about what you know about the Great Depression. Share your knowledge with your tutor or student.**
- **What would it be like to have lived in the Depression? After reading this account, talk about what you thought and compare to the author's experience.**

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

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

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

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

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

Everybody was not that bad off. If they had a job they did not make much but it did not take much to live on back then. If you had \$3.00 you could live for a week. Bread was only a nickel. Milk was a dime. So you can see that it didn't take much to live on. Rent was about \$3.00 a week. But if you didn't have a job it was hard. Now I am trying to go back to school



Conversation Corner Group at Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library

and learn how to spell and do math. It is so important to go to school. You of today have a chance to stay in school.

1997-98: The Love of My Life...

By: Annina Morgan

The love of my life is my husband, George. When I first met my husband, I was 16 years old. He had already met me when I was 14, but I didn't remember him. He was working at the same place I was working, He had an eye for me.

He took me home in a snowstorm and he took me home to the wrong house. He thought I was still living there, but I wasn't, so I stayed for a second in the truck and he wondered why I wouldn't get out. He didn't know I'd moved with my father and sisters out of my aunt's house and so he asked me where I lived. I said,

"I can walk the rest of the way." He said, "No, I'll drive you," because he wanted to know where I lived.

Later on, a few months later he asked me to go to the movies. So we went to the movies but we never used to see the end of the movie because my father wanted me home at a certain time. So we always had to guess how the movies ended. My father had to be both mother and father to me so that's why he was strict and set a good example. Two years later we got engaged and he went into the Navy. Whenever he has a pass, he would come visit me. About a year later we got married. It was true love. After we were married, I went to live with him in the Navy. My husband was very

patient and taught me so many things about life and love. We had a lot of dreams together. We had three sons we love very much. And now we have grandchildren. We'll be married 39 years in May. And we're looking forward to getting together and being more in love than we already are for the rest of our lives.

It's a beautiful love, the only love I've ever had in my whole life. He's an instrument to me. Love is kind. Love is patient. Love is forgiving and love is understanding. We never go to bed angry. Always go to bed happy and say you love each other. You never know when you won't wake up. He is so kind. Every time I fix supper, he says, "Thank you, little darling. Thank you for my supper." He doesn't have to thank me. I enjoy doing this for him. He's so sweet to thank me. He's been everything to me. I wouldn't know what to do without him. I don't know how to express it any more that

I've said. This is the love of my life. And God has been with us always.

To my loving husband which I'll always love with all my heart. With love, Nina.

1998: Love and Support to the Stranger

By: Enisa Dosen

After a couple of months of my arrival to the United States, I asked myself what's next and what to do. Dilemma is which I found myself was: "Is it worth it to live in another country far from my homeland, where everything is strange and unknown?" Questions on which I had no answers were popping up every day. The unslept nights and days full of uncertainty where hard to handle. So, I decided to look for a job hoping that would take care of the pressure I felt. The not knowing language gave me another set of problems, starting from myself. I felt unsecure so I started telling myself: "God will help me."

In life I was always in charge, but now all that was changed. That was all new to me. I wasn't young any more, all this was hard for me. New beginning is very hard and painful. I felt as a stranger in a strange country. My caring nature gave me a little hope that I will find love and moral support in a new surroundings. With that decision I started working in John Knox Village as a food server.

The thought that I don't know English enough scared me. I faced the situation where language was a problem, but each time I found someone willing to help. Each time I asked for help from my coworkers I was worried if they

will understand. The days were passing by. One day soon after I started working was especially remembered. Ms. Christine Eagan, dining room manager, called me into her office. She stood in front of me and told me: "Repeat after me, "I believe in Ani." In short time I notice that relationship in John Knox Village between tenants and between workers is on high level. The hard evidence is moral support I receive specially from Ms. Katie Gonzales, Juan Martinez, Lashawn, Lita, Marvin, etc. Relationship of Don Despres with workers was warm and every morning he ask how are we, how is job going..., that makes me happy.

After a part time position I started working a full time. All those old tenants happy faces gave me a strength and faith in myself. (They were not so much older than I), plus all smiling faces of people worked with. Each day they asked how am I, if I heard anything from my country. There was a situation where tenants would bring pictures and adds from papers of my country. I learned to share beauty of days

with them. I was thinking of Christine's words "I believe in Ani." It gave me moral support that I needed so much. All the love that they gave me I am able to return now through my job. All those good faces, old faces that still have traces of beauty gave me their love when

I most needed. I manage to do my job right so I received award for the Best Worker of March, 1995. That was the most exciting day for me. I was very happy because they believed in me and accepted me. Award surprised me because there are so many employees. I couldn't believe they chose me.

Now after two and a half years at the same job I can say that I am so happy that I came to

- This article talks about taking a risk. Tutors and students can talk about times they took a risk (or didn't). How did things turn out compared to the author?
- Write your own essay about your discussion and submit it to Visions!

John Knox Village and that I met all those lovely faces.

If you come across someone that feels depressed or unhappy as I was, he or she should look for people who are willing to help, there is more of them out there than you think. Believe me, I'm an example. I can say now that I have good friends, whom I love and certainly wish for those friendships to last. At the end big thank you one more time for all the love and moral support.

2002: Flooded Waters

By: John Roe

One rainy day my brother and I, with three friends, were swimming in a flooded creek. The creek water had risen fifteen to twenty feet, and the current was swifter than we could imagine. But, as all young boys do, we felt invincible. We were quickly swept downstream. No one could know or see the danger that lay ahead. There was a fence crossing the creek which caught more lily pads than I have ever seen. They were backed up so thick, you could actually walk on top of them, and the length was as long as a football field, if not more. This chamber of death lay waiting as if it knew we were coming. With every twist and turn we seemed to be going faster and faster. Suddenly, one of us yelled out, and the fight for our lives began. Everything seemed to turn into slow motion. We had only seconds to escape. As the five of us struggled to get out of the swift current, I was pulled under. The next five minutes would change my outlook on life, or perhaps the afterlife. As a twelve year old boy, I struggled and fought with all of my might to free myself from the hands of death that clearly had its grip on me. This is when, for a brief moment, I was given a front row seat to it all. I seemed to be floating above the trees and looking down upon my brother and friends who

were standing on top of the lily pads. They were frantically ripping and pulling at them as my lifeless body floated beneath them. That is one sight I will never forget. Then, for no apparent reason, as fast as the horror began, my lifeless body, covered with some kind of slime, popped through a small hole, and I was pulled from the clutches of death.

Most people would simply call it a miracle. Privately, to myself, I began to wish I had drowned. Over the years I have asked God, even in anger why I was saved to be given the curse of being illiterate. I have wasted the past twenty-five years in self-pity, and blaming God. Finally, I got mad at myself and attacked my illiteracy like it was a big bully in a schoolyard, and give it a bloody nose. The intimidation and fear that it once had over me is gone. The bully is still around, and from time to time he lets me know. But, soon he will be forced to leave the schoolyard for good.

2004: My Dream (A Short Story)

By Goldie Mingo

One day I was at work. Joe gave me a piece of paper to read. I wasn't able to read the piece of paper, so Joe told our coworkers. My coworkers giggled and laughed at me. I was so angry that I went under a tree and ate lunch by myself. While I was eating lunch, I accidentally rubbed on a Budweiser can. When I rubbed on the can, a genie came out.

The genie told me I had one wish. Now I could have wished for a million dollars or a beautiful new car or I could have even wished for a better mind. But I wanted to teach Joe a lesson, so I told the genie to send Joe to a foreign country, Africa, where everyone speaks Swahili. The genie sent Joe to a town where everyone spoke Swahili and the street signs and hotel information was also written in Swahili.

The genie told Joe if he could get back to America, he will be granted a million dollars. Joe started his journey on trying to get back to America. Joe came upon a man, and asked him where the airport is? The man spoke in Swahili and Joe did not understand his response. So Joe thought with his mind, he would read the telephone book, but the telephone was written in Swahili also. Joe went to the bus station and asked the bus driver if he was going to the airport. The bus driver spoke in Swahili. Joe finally realized that he could not get back to America because he did not understand Swahili.

Joe had to get the genie to help him get back to America. The genie helped me to teach Joe a lesson by showing him that he should not make fun of other people's reading disability. My 30 minute lunch break was over and I woke up and realized it was just a dream.

2005: Going Fishing Against My Father's Will By: Orien Hall

In my childhood days we lived in Indianapolis, Indiana only three blocks from White River. Both my parents worked days at the grocery store six days a week. Since I was young and alone I was told never to go down to the river because it was dangerous and I could drown like several children already had. However, I loved to fish and my father was too busy working to take me fishing. My father hated fishing.

Besides, he said, "Fishing is a waste of time." In past summers beginning when I was only five years old we would go to my Uncle's farm where I fished with my older cousins in their pond. There my fishing gear was heavy duty sewing thread, a bobby pen, and corn for bait with which I caught small Blue Gills. But by the

time I was 8 or 9 we no longer went to the farm but I still wanted to fish. So I bought a little fishing gear of hooks, line, and bobbers which would fold up and fit in a cigar box. I hid the cigar box in the only safe place I could find which was on the front porch under the glider with its skirt reaching to the porch floor. Several times a week either on Saturday or after school

I would dig my fishing worms in the back yard and walk the three block to White River and fish. At the river I just took the hook in my hand and threw it as hard as I could into the river. However, the fish I caught I couldn't bring home so I let them go. One Sunday morning as we were eating breakfast my father said, "We are going to scrub the front porch." After breakfast he got up and said to me, "Let's go out and move the glider." As we moved the glider my cigar box with fishing gear was very visible. Father opened my cigar box and immediately saw my fishing gear. He looked at me and said "You better not lie but tell me the truth." I told him the truth, "I've been fishing down at the river." He was furious, really furious!! That ended my fishing trips down to the river. My father knew a gentleman family friend named Glen who loved to fish. One day, to my surprise, Glen called me up on a Friday and asked me if I could go fishing with him

Tutors can have students find words of a type in any Visions story. They can find nouns, adjectives, adverbs or verbs. To take it further, have the student change the root word to other word forms. For example: help, helper (nouns), to help (verb), helpful (adjective), helpfully (adverb). Students often use the wrong word forms while learning, so this can help them! However, note that not all words have all forms.

Saturday. He picked me up early Saturday morning and we fished from his boat. I had a regular fishing pole to fish with and I could keep, clean and eat my fish. Glen took me fishing about once a month for years. He taught me how to fish. Glen took me to good fishing places like the lake and reservoir, and he showed me how to take care of my gear, a boat, and its motor. Until this day I still love to fish. When my two boys were little I would take them fishing on week ends and vacations. They liked to fish as much as I did when I was little. They still fish. My older son will fish all day and he would still rather fish than eat. My younger son is not as fond of fishing as his brother, but he likes it enough that he bought the two of us a three day fishing trip in the gulf of Mexico. Also I have been fortunate enough to take my grandchildren fishing.

2006: My Grand Dad

By: Manuel Fernández

Grandad was born in the late 19th century in a small village near Gijon, a city in Spain famous for its “sidra” and “turrón.” When he was around 20 years old, the bad economic situation led him to leave for Argentina, where an uncle was established in Santa Cruz, one of the southern provinces.

My grandfather worked initially as a “gaucho” on my Great Great uncles farm. He learnt how to build fences and all kinds of skills necessary on a farm. After a few years he had enough money saved, and with a credit from a Bank he bought his own farm. The farm was purchased under an agreement to raise sheep. It was located in “Santa Cruz” and he named it “Cancha Carrera” in honor of an Independence battle.

In the first years, Manuel needed to buy all the animals to start the business; he bought them in “Rio Gallegos” a city located 500 miles

from the farm. At these time trucks didn't exist, so Manuel herded 3000 sheep to the farm aided by several dogs.

He built his first house in the mountains, but the ancient “Patagones” Indians burnt it down. Today you can find the basement of the house and remains of arrows.

A few years later he decided to build a new house in a valley, a very beautiful place, where you can see the “Cordillera de los Andes,” the mountains between Argentina and Chile. It was a big house where he had 13 children by his wife Leonor (remember that in those years computers and television didn't exist). The house had 14 rooms and all of them are very spacious; outside the house on one side of the valley my granddad built 3 tunnels, where he stored all kind of food and supplies. In Cancha Carrera the winters were very long and hard, confining the family to the house.

They had there own electricity provided by a generator set. Granddad was an early environmentalist, he stopped the generator in the early evening forcing the whole family to go to bed. Not to far to the house he had the quarters for his staff, gauchos, sheep sherrer and other farm laborers many of them from Chile.

My grandfather was also a pioneer, because he showed the limits to Perito Moreno, a Geologist & Surveyor, who draw the map between Argentina and Chile.

I'm very proud to have his same name, I'm trying to be like him every day.

Thanks Granddad.

2007: Almost a Spy

By: Eva Vedernjak

When I had finished my high-school, at the age of eighteen, many, many years ago, I decided to take a trip abroad for the first time, without anyone of my family. It was an adven-

ture journey, because I wanted to be completely independent, thinking only how to work with a very little knowledge about any foreign language. My decision to take that adventure trip was for living alone, working and studying and doing my best. I suppose that was the most important step in my life. I did it because of my free spirit measured with my curious mood. The plan was to travel to Germany, specifically to the region in the South of Germany, named "Schwarzwald". In English it means Black Wood. I had chosen that country, because I studied German language in my entire high-school, so I could defend myself a little bit more. Upon my arrival to the town of Schwarzwald, Herrenalb, the whole place was covered with white crystal, flakey snow. From the beginning, it was a magical breathtaking view of that place in the middle of the winter. It was a tourist, small town but plenty of elegant hotels, where I found my first job as a baby sitter. I worked there only six month, and then I wanted to move to a bigger city named Hanover that is located in the middle of Germany. My curiosity pushed me to learn more about that German language so I took advance foreign language class at a local high-school to enhance my speaking ability in German. By enhancing my speaking abilities I was able to be offered a better job as assistant in a department store and to plan volleyball in a German team. Then I obtained all what I wanted. I felt very lucky as a young girl and thought that nothing and nobody could destroy that success I had reached by myself. One weekend, I decided to visit Berlin, much bigger than Hanover, and its famous wall. It was difficult to believe that I would stay in front of that wall where many people had died because of trying to cross illegally East Berlin to the West Berlin. As everybody knows, that city was divided in two by the enormous and high wall, watched out by American soldiers on one side and on the other side by Sovietic soldiers. The differ-

ence between those two cities was greater than the wall itself: the view on the East side with an old architecture, the buildings almost falling down without painting, comunism, without the free expression or writing, no radio to listen to or to see anything interesting. The view on the West side was so different: democracy, total liberty for walking wherever you like, whatever you want to see or listen to, modern buildings, people with good cars and jobs. When I arrived to that wall, adrenalin was increasing my blood circulation and causing my braeth to be taken away. A Russian soldier, in front of me, greeted me very politely and ask me for my passport. I didn't hesitate and immediately reached it in my purse and pulled out my red passport because of my Yogoslaw origin. The color of my passport was red because of identifying my country status, that was comunism (but not anymore). Once my feet stepped over the line I had crossed the wall to East Berlin. I looked everywhere but didn't see anything delightfully, so I wanted to come back to democratic civilization. I got back to the wall, but on the other side, there were American soldiers. The same proccedure was done with me showing again my red passport. However, it was a different reply from American soldier who did not allow me to cross the line back to West Berlin. I was told that I couldn't go back because he suspected me being a SPY!! I had to go to jail. He thought that I was a Yugoslaw spy. At that moment I could go to jail because of my ignorance. I stayed there completely alone, without my passport, without my liberty. I had only one choice, to call my boss and begged him to help me to get out of that problem. So, he did it. Thanks a God, my boss was a very good man, he knew me very well and he immediately took a plane and came to rescue me from the hell. I had forgotten completely that incident, but after many years later, when I wanted to travel to United States for the first

time, my visa was denied and the council told me that I was charged as a spy by CIA because of the incident in Berlin.

My interview was really hard and it had taken me more than two hours to convince him that I was only curious as a young student but without any political preference and that I had no idea what being spy meant at all. Suddenly, he stood up, shook my hands and said that I was

free to go wherever I wanted, but I was going to have some shadow over my head and I would never ever forget my past. That's all about my spy experience in the past.

2008: I Am Blessed

By: Lilibeth Carleo

I am blessed because I have the most valuable and precious treasure: my kids. My little girl is 13 years old, her name is Michelle Angelly and she is the best daughter that a mom could desire, she is my little angel. My baby boy is 3 years old and his name is Carlos Daniel, he is the sweetest and kindest boy of his age that you can find anywhere; they are both the reason I am blessed for.

Nowadays life is hard and complicated and frequently I have this kind of days that make me forget how blessed I am; but then come my kids and is incredible how with only a sweet glance of them I can feel happy and thankful

- Some pieces use a wider vocabulary than your student might have. Use some of these exciting stories as an opportunity to increase word recognition and reading comprehension.
- Check out “1001 Vocabulary and Spelling Questions” from Learning Express’s downloadable resources, available to all tutors with their library card. Get some good ideas, then, create some exercises for your student using vocabulary in context, strategically misspelled words, and multiple choice reading comprehension.

with God for giving me those precious gifts. Michelle with her beautiful smile can make bright any dark day and Carlos Daniel can heal my soul with only one “I love you Mommy”. Everyday I tried to enjoy them and spend quality time, but also I tried to teach them how to be a good person, to have principles, respect to other people, treat others like they would like be treated, to study a lot, to take care of themselves so that way they may have a better future than I did and most important how to take care of others, help other people

if they can.

At this time I think I have doing very well job with my little angel Michelle, she is sweet, respectful, clever, I feel very proud of her, I love to hear when she plays the flute it sounds like angel, She and I enjoy a lot reading together and listening music just before go to bed while we talking about what was going during the day. Between my children there is a difference of 10 years! Yes is a lot, but my boy is a gift from heaven and however he is still a little boy I am sure he will be as marvelous and clever as Michelle is right now.

So, as you see, they are the reason for my being blessed because of Michelle and Carlos Daniel.

2009: Old Man at 24!

By: Hongadema Tchamitoki

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 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 I got by working hard in weekend and vacations was just enough to help my father. But at high school things got harder for me and I seeked fo help from the Salesian Christian Community of my city. They helped me by giving me a shelter and paying 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

Ask language learners to write about a problem they've had in life, and its solution. This increases a learner's sense of self-efficacy. For outlining and structure of a problem-solution essay (as well as other types of essays), all library clients and tutors have unlimited access to Learning Express's downloadable "Write Better Essays in 20 Minutes A Day" from their adult core skills section. Check it out!

there. But I decided to move there and on moving day I met, in car, a lady, who became like am other for me. Because of her, life became easier for me when I got my Master's Degree in Law five years later.

How did I come to America after all that an 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 bever 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 the American Lottery Visa Program. I refused. He told me he could do it for me 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 English as Second Language has been very helpful for me. For someone my age, I cans ay 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.

2010: First Step, Learning English!!

By: María Cristina Rincón Pérez

I came to this country 2 years ago, I had some knowledge on English but it was very basic, I thought it was going to be easy for me to speak the language, but the reality was different, I was speaking and understanding very little, as the months passed I was really concerned that this task every time was further away for me to complete.

Going out was a nightmare, asking for directions, in a restaurant, everything was so difficult, I always had to relay on my husband to talk for me, I was so embarrassed I was not able to ask things for myself, those situations gave me the strength to continue with my education.

I started taking some classes in different places, I had very good teachers and I did my homework at home, reading and studying, every day was an easier one, I went through grammar and conversational classes.

I went to the Library in Town and Country and found out about some classes and a tutor program, I signed up for both, The classes were really good, we had people to talk to for an hour, that was really important, we talked about everything, the weather, our home countries, but we always ended up talking about food, that was so funny and the most important thing was that we talked for an hour with a person that was able to correct us and make us a better speakers. I met people from all over the world, that is an experience I will never forget.

With the tutor I had the best experience, she was the kindest person I have ever known, we had a meeting every week and we talked about different topics, my experience learning this language has thought me that you need to be very careful and ask for everything, no matter what, she was very patient with me, she cor-

rected me those mistakes that nobody was going to do, she had some materials that are those little details that nobody was going to teach you, and we talk and talk for hours every week, I have homework every week, essays, pages for complete and so many different things to do. I had so many different questions about this country, about the surroundings, the neighborhood, about the church, she gave me that guidance and that is very important for me, knowing that I have someone to trust and to ask.

The space in the library was always clean, the people that work there is so nice, they were always willing to help us, I would recommend for anyone who needs and wants to learn English to go ahead and ask, go to the library and sign up for this program, you are going to be as lucky as I was with my tutor.

2011: Waiting for my husband and son

By: Vivian Figueroa

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.

I want speak good Englis and to be American citizenship. I love United State.

2012 :Untitled

By: Ramiro Barrero

Mi name is Ramiro Barrero

My wife name is Flor Manzano

We are from Colombia

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

Our daughter, granddaughter and boyfrend mi doughter - theyir withing 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 restorants. Take two beer my wife one cocktail.

At six o'clock - we go to the Tampa. Maritza's boyfrend drivend 4 aurs.

I love Tampa. My firsth job was in the airport of Tampa, claning elevator - and loader. Worked two mounsth; and then find job in other companny named D.S.E. Inc. Mannfactury - product - to the goverment. (I have ex-pirence in machinery of plastic in my contry during thirty years.) Immediately. Get me training to operate one machine .- Good job.-

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

To celebrate their stage, student work is submitted uncorrected. You can find works at a lower level, like this one by Mr. Ramiro, throughout the Visions archive. With higher level ESL students, it can be a confidence-boosting exercise to find and potential correct the errors. Spelling and grammar mistakes here can also be caught by literacy students. Thanks to Jim Alcorn for this idea!

2013: Fifty years Married

By: Elizabeth Millan

An open book - His glasses,
Syrup for the cough
What Rich smell you have my life!!!
You smell really good today, my love!!!
We were just married
It was usually expressions
After the shower - He smell
Like Yardley, or I don't know
While I perfumed my body
With small bottles of "Christian Dior"
But today - today - what difference!!
He smells to ointment
And I, to "El Tigre" cream
That I put me wholesale
!What it change the time
Ever since he knew me!!
Long ago, it looked good
On top on my night table
One rose - his portrait
A perfume, and a clock
But now, - A vial of aspirins
The rigorous ointment - omeprasol
Some bandages - my glasses
The pills of camphor
The syringe - the small vial
Cotton and alcohol
And - upon his night table
Piled up, for making better space
A glass with water for his teeth,
The small bottle for the friction,
And water for the aspirin
For it suddenly coming us some pain
However, we don't long for
"What the wind take away"
We remember what we were
And we living the present day

In the morning - without to be in a hurry
Always the same song!!
“what Have you asleep, my heaven
A strong pain wake myself up!
How are you, today, my love!
Now, I have a strong pain !
But, in the nights, Just in case
Have a good night my life”
Remembering something better
Have a Good night my love”
Smelling ointments and injections
We prayed an our father
We repeat the same of ever
And we are grateful to God
The same of yesterday and today.

Often, Visions writing involves students saying something meaningful about significant people in their lives. For shy or reluctant students, this can sometimes be a challenge. However, practicing with someone else’s experience as a starting point can facilitate the process and engage the imagination. Try this: after reading and understanding a submission that acts as an ode to a loved one, have the student write a letter from the perspective of a loved one. What would the husband say to the wife here?

2019-2020 Conversation Corner Organizers

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