



HILLSBOROUGH
LITERACY COUNCIL
Teaching Adults to Read and to Speak English

Visions

Our Voices

2023



Message from the Hillsborough Literacy Council President

Welcome to this year's edition of Visions. In these pages, members of our Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) community share their stories reminding us of the ability of language proficiency to amplify "Our Voices."

Learning to read and write in English empowers HLC students to express their thoughts and opinions and to connect with others. Through HLC's one-on-one tutoring and Conversation Corners, HLC students' voices grow stronger and more confident. We applaud and honor your diligent efforts and commitment to English literacy. Your voices enrich our community and foster understanding of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.

The HLC students' voices would not flourish without the support from our tutors, conversation corner leaders, and other volunteers who play an instrumental role in our students' learning journeys. Thank you for giving your time to build communication skills in others.

A special thank you from the HLC Board to our donors, partners and sponsors for your commitment to helping adults achieve English communication skills. Together our students, tutors, donors, and volunteers create a chorus of voices that transforms individual lives and strengthens the fabric of our society.

Finally, congratulations to our authors, graduates, and honorees. We look forward to witnessing the remarkable achievements that await you as you continue to unlock the power of your voices.




HILLSBOROUGH
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Brandi Meredith
President
Hillsborough Literacy Council

Message from the Library Director

Literacy improves lives. Basic literacy expands capabilities, reduces poverty, increases participation in the jobs market, and has positive effects on health and sustainable development. Literacy is an important skill and a basic educational right.

Our vision at the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library - built on literacy as a cornerstone of community - is that access to information improves the quality of life and creates a foundation upon which those who have access, may participate in their government, affect change, and strengthen neighborhoods.

For people to come together and build sustainable and strong communities, a basic level of written communication – and the ability to understand it – are required. Basic adult literacy is also the gateway for participation in existing communities. Improving basic literacy broadens the range of possibilities for community involvement, offering greater individual success and satisfaction.

The Hillsborough Literacy Council gives our residents the tools to thrive together. We recognize 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, and I thank you. Your example serves as inspiration to others who would help bring the world of words to everyone.



Andrew Breidenbaugh
Director of Library Services
Tampa-Hillsborough County
Public Library

The Hillsborough Literacy Council

The Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) is a nonprofit affiliate of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library teaching functionally and marginally illiterate adults to read and write. Through its Adult Basic Literacy program, 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 48 hours of tutoring time, with a minimum of one hour per week. 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.

The Hillsborough Literacy Council Board of Directors

Brandi Meredith, President
Jenifer Schneider, Vice President
Drew Pfeifer, Treasurer
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Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative Library Support

Andrew Breidenbaugh, Director of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library
Chely Cantrell, Library Brand Innovation Officer
Jeffrey Huggins, Community Engagement Manager
Lisa Clark, Literacy Coordinator
Giselle Suastegui, Literacy Assistant

Annual Student & Tutor Appreciation Assembly

Welcome and Introductions

Brandi Meredith, HLC President
Andrew Breidenbaugh, Library Director

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Liana Fox
Trustee and Chair of the Education Committee
for the Tampa Bay History Center

Student Speakers

Awards and Recognitions

Students of the Year

Tutor of the Year

Graduates

Sylvia Miller Award

Closing Remarks

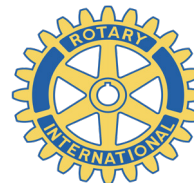
Brandi Meredith, HLC President



Robert W. Saunders, Sr. Public Library
1505 N. Nebraska Ave.
Tampa, FL 33602-2849

September 30, 2023
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**Special Thanks to The Mosaic Company and Rotary Club
for their generous support of our annual tutor-student recognition ceremony.**



Hillsborough Literacy Council Student Stories

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 and commitment. The following entries are written by our current students. The entries have been printed in the exact way the students have written them.

Please enjoy and learn about our amazing students through their work.

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Future Dream

by Yennifer Berrios

My dream for the future is first to have good health. I want to learn to speak English to have a better job opportunity. I also want to have a career from this country. I like the economy and am ever proud this country. *Learning English is my passion because like to talk with people.* I like joining and meet people from other countries.

Also I like to world travel, meet their cultures, ideology, and gastronomy. My project for future is see my daughter have a profession that she likes and see her happy.

Lesser Known History: Connection between the Yale University and India

by Uma Naidu Jonnareddy

The name Yale came from Elihu Yale, a Boston born businessman after whom the university was named in 1718. Yale University (Connecticut) is the third oldest institution of higher education in the United States and one of the Nine colonial colleges before the American Revolution.

The British first landed on Indian territory in 1608 for trade with Indian merchants and the British established their dominance in Indian subcontinent and started to colonize it as the "British East India company." Elihu Yale (1649-1721) was a British American colonial philanthropist and an unethical businessman from East India company who ranked as governor of Madras (a city in India, now it's called Chennai). He later lost that position under charges of corruption, but till that time, he had amassed a huge fortune by doing illegal trades from India.

Cotton Mather, a Harvard graduate whose father was Increase Mather and a president of Harvard college for 20 years. Cotton's father was ousted from the Harvard management and to take his father's revenge, he was desperate to start his own college,

which should be more famous than Harvard. When Cotton heard of Elihu's huge fortune, he approached him with a proposal, if Elihu made a sizeable donation to the college, then Cotton would rename the college after him. This way Yale University gets its name "YALE" From Elihu Yale.



PAMUKKALE

by Selin Er

When you think of Turkey, PAMUKKALE is one of the first places that come to mind. Pamuk means cotton in Turkish and kale means castle, so this is our cotton castle, and you will understand why when you see the photos or watch the videos. Actually, Pamukkale is one of the most photographed sites on Instagram.

Pamukkale, along with Hierapolis archeological site and Cleopatra's Antique Pool is on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1988.

Pamukkale offers an unforgettable experience with the natural beauty of snow-white limestone. However, that is not the only attraction in Pamukkale. Hierapolis with its ancient theater and archeology museum is heaven for history lovers. One of the biggest attractions in Pamukkale is the 17 calcium rich hot springs with temperatures ranging from 95 °Fahrenheit to 212 °Fahrenheit.

Would you like flying over this natural and historical beauty? Or would you prefer to enjoy the views from above with a glass of local wine? Pamukkale also offers paragliding and hot air balloon rides.

Speaking of Pamukkale you must visit Cleopatra's Antique Pool. This pool has been gifted to the famous Egyptian queen Cleopatra by the Roman general Marcus Antonius and it's believed that Cleopatra swam in this pool. Would you not

like to say that you swam in the same pool that Cleopatra swam once?

To do all of this all you need is just \$5 to enter Pamukkale. My suggestion would be going there during spring or fall. In summer months Pamukkale gets very overcrowded and very hot.

Oh, before I forget, there is also a fun fact about Pamukkale. Pamukkale's sister city is in the U.S. and it's Las Vegas!!!

Visit Pamukkale, you will never regret it.

Untitled

by Anonymous

So when me and my family fly to P.R. on a plane and it landed we were happy because it made us feel safe. So then went to pick up the SUV and went to visit her family. So the next day we got up and rode horses and I thought the girls were going to be scared but they love it.

Untitled

by Josefina Arrequín

My name is Josefina Arrequín, and I am a Hillsborough Literacy Council tutoring graduate.

First of all, I would like to say thank you so much Ms. Zuly, for her support and help in tutoring me in English. Thanks to her, now I am able to enjoy visits to parks, stores, restaurants, movie theatres, and a lot of places.

Before tutoring, I was scared when someone said my name because my English was awful! And I was scared I wouldn't understand. But now I've learned to pay attention and have a conversation with others.

I want to say thank you so much to everyone at the council for helping the community to enjoy a full life

in the American culture. I recommend this service 100% to anyone who wants to learn English and do life in this country.

I am here. And I made it!

When I signed up for tutoring it was with the purpose to help my son with homework and to be able to communicate with his school and his teachers. Now I am able to do all of those things, and so much more. My confidence speaking has grown so much I even started as a representative at Mary Kay! Thank you so much Ms. Zuly. She's the best! The best teacher, for her patience, dedication, and effort.

If you want to achieve what I have, join the HLC tutoring service.



A New Goal

by Maria del Pilar Lopez Cañón

"My name is Maria del Pilar and I have been attending to the English tutorial classes since September 2022. Although it has been a short time, I am feeling now more confident to speak and my tutor Mr. Mohan Rao always has been very patient and has a word of encouragement for me.

I think that the most important thing in life is to have goals... so, to learn and speak English fluently is one of my major dreams, despite my age because I am in my fifties, but with all the will, desires and the heart of a child.

Biography of Bernardo O' Higgins

by Roberto Mallea

Bernardo O' Higgins was born in Chile on 1718, natural son of the Vice-roy of Peru, Ambrosio O' Higgins.

At that time Bernardo was named Bernardo Riquelme. On his childhood was under care of his mother and grandparents but reaching his teen age was sent by his father to continue education in London, England under care and supervision of a tutor. On the death of his father by the will was recognized as his legitimate son and named Bernardo O' Higgins.

Through his education in England was motivated to learn artistic paint but also had a political approach toward the libertarian movement in America following the example of United States on getting the liberty the American colonies so he came back to Chile in 1805.

The first libertarian movement in Chile was September 18th at Santiago, the capital with a manifesto of Independence due to the imprisonment of the King Fernando VII by Napoleon Bonaparte in Spain. This National Chilean Board broke up into the war between patriots and loyalists to the king.

O' Higgins participated as an army officer in several battles between 1811 and 1814. On October 1814 the Chilean army was defeated by the Spanish army. The devastated army ran to Argentina where they found support from General Jose de San Martin. After three years of preparation of Argentina and Chilean troops San Martin and O' Higgins returned to Chile crossing the Andes mountains defeated the royalists (Spaniards) in Chacabuco on 1817 and the final and victorious battle was in Maipu April 1818.

The Chilean people named Bernardo O' Higgins as a Supreme Director of the Chilean Nation. There are controversial opinions regarding to his political behavior, but he gave some significant steps he did as a real reformer such as prohibited the use of nobility titles as duke, baron, lord etc. arguing

that Chile was a republic not a monarchy, order the construction of a General Cemetery for everybody because no catholic people were not allow the use of the Catholic Cemetery, and repealed the games of bull fighting and cock fighting, and created the elementary school education across the country and also the Military School preparing army officers.

After serving the government for 4 years a coup d' etat directed by General Ramon Freire obligated to reign on 1823. O' Higgins left to Peru where Peruvians gave him a warm welcome regarding that he had supported the independence of Peru when he was president. He died at the age of 64 years in Lima, Peru.



Do you want to save Life?

by Mimi P.

If somebody asks you " Do you want to save a life? " You will say "Yes!" without hesitation.

However if somebody asks you " Do you want to adopt a dog? or Do you want to rescue a dog? Most people will not say " Yes!" unfortunately.

Do you know how many animals are in shelters? Every year 6.5million dogs, cats, and other former pets are abandoned or lost and enter shelters. but about less than half of them are adopted.

I know adopting a pet is an enormous responsibility. I know that very well, because we have three dogs in my house. We had two dogs originally and we foster one more dog now. We have been fostering this dog

whose name is Cali for about over one year now. We are looking for her forever home but no luck so far. She is very sweet. She is a Labrador mix, five years old female. She has already been potty training. She loves to go for a ride with you so she gets a little too excited in the car, but she is calm inside the house. She likes the beach. She just wants somebody to love her. She makes weird sounds like Scooby-doo and acts like it too. She is very good with kids, loving, and intuitive.



I guarantee that she will be your kid's best friend. If you are interested in adopting Cali, please contact "steve.phillips24@gmail.com".

You might have hundreds of reasons to not adopt pets. Even if you are not ready to adopt. You can at least foster pets. I think that the fostering system is a great way to teach your kids responsibilities or you want pets but you are staying in the U.S temporarily for a job. You can take in pets temporarily. You can extend pets' life until they find a forever home. Also you can donate, volunteer and more info search for "Humane Society".

Please ask yourself "Do I want to save a life?" Be brave and say "yes!". I felt good when I said Yes!

Untitled

by Jacquis Uribe

I lived the most amazing experience under sea. That was my first trip with my daughter, only the two of us. We traveled to Aruba and decided to take an adventure under sea in a submarine tour called Atlantis.

That experience was truly wonderful and unforgettable. We explored the depths of the ocean 150 feet under water. We had a really good time. We saw a lot of colorful fish, coral reefs, shipwreck, and in a moment the submarine touched ground and the crew put on sharkmovie music that was a little scary, but funny at the same time.

We spent 1 1/2 hours under the ocean that I'll remember always.



Untitled

by Camila Sanchez

I did not like animals until I discovered my chihuahua mix. Leah, she is adorable and sweet, she is part of the family. I never imagined I would feel this way.

I enjoy living in Tampa. I want to learn the language, I like it and try very hard to practice speaking English. Speaking 2 languages is my goal. I can write but have a problem to speak if this country has given me many opportunities, which I thank God for and my talented teacher is a great person.

I help my family back home especially my nephew (Camilo) that has Down Syndrome, who is 30 years old. It is very expensive to care for them in Colombia. Camilo enjoys his time in school with his friends and at home with his loving parent.

My future plans are to visit Jerusalem one day and return to Colombia to see my family that will be pleased to see how I have progressed.



Pride And Power

by Gunachitra Karunakaran

"Vision" is a bigger picture and future oriented. I have dreams and goals for the future. I worked hard and achieved the goals too. I come from a very religious family who has some old fashioned and ideas about the role of women.

So, it was not an easy task for me to have 'modern' goals and dreams. My education was my first achievement, but this was my first step on the ladder of success. Then I married my husband, and we had a child. We got an opportunity to come to the United States.

Everything was new to me here, but I liked it, and I learned a lot of new things. I made new friends and enjoyed exploring the new place. Homemaking is hard work and requires much time and energy. Sometimes as a homemaker I need a little inspiration to help motivate myself to get things done.

Then I got an opportunity to join as a volunteer teacher in our Tamil association. I have been teaching my language to students who are interested in learning Tamil for the past 5 years. I have been in the United States for 7 years now, and I am currently living in Florida.

I learned about the Hillsborough Literacy Council's "Conversation Corner" and the Florida Literacy Coalition's Zoom meetings. *These resources helped me improve my English, and now I can speak English confidently.* I also improved my vocabulary and fluency. As a result, I was able to attend an interview confidently, and I now have a job as a preschool teacher.

Every day you can learn and experience something new. That's life. Do something, believe in yourself. It's okay to be different. Wish it, plan it and do it. I can And I will. Thank you.



Untitled

by Livaniuska Diaz

I was born in 1981, almost 42 years ago. According to those who know, you are born only once, but I can assure you that in 2022 I was born again. And it is that emigrating to a country totally different from yours is like being born again, everything is new: language, culture, places, customs, in short, everything.

At the beginning you are usually like a baby just out of the womb, when you emigrate you go through the same stages as a baby at birth: amazement, yearning and adaptation.

In the stage of amazement, I used to be dazzled by the large buildings, the immense shops and the overwhelming traffic. A few days later I felt longing for my poor and distant land, but at the same time loving and warm. Finally, adaptation and with it the acceptance that everything new is real and part of your current life. At this stage you feel that you cannot with everything that is coming, and you find each challenge extremely difficult. Learning GPS, language, bus transportation, medical insurance, primary education, online and physical shopping is usually disruptive at first.

Only you can transform barriers into challenges and take victory with each learning. The United States, a country of opportunities and growth, opened the doors to each of my purposes.

The Caribbean English course for Spanish speakers was the first of them, in which I learn online, exchange and practice with other students while my daughter with the ESOL program and the help of the teachers feels confident and safe despite the language differences.

Then I found the *Hillsborough Public Library, an ideal place for learning*, informational, literary support and an opportunity to establish conversations in English with natives and students through virtual Conversation Corners and their emotional and interesting topics.

This year I also met the Hispanic Council, a big community where parents learn every day of education in the United States and exchange their experiences.

One of the most beautiful experiences I had was at the Church of Scientology of Tampa. I don't think I got there by chance. I was invited after a free online finance course and really met Marta, Leonardo and

the beautiful mission of Scientology showed me the beautiful and spiritual side of life.

2023 has been a sensational year in which I have been reborn in the midst of the American Dream.



A Slap My Best Friend

by Yesenia Giraldo

Yesterday I received a call from my sister. My sister was telling me a sad situation that she had with her best friend. They have a discussion and then my sister feels disappointed in her friend. After that I sent to her a little story that I read days ago. The story said:

Two friends were traveling in the dessert. They had a strong argument. One of them slapped to other. The man offended wrote on the sand. Today my best friend gave me a slap. They continued their road and they arrived to a source of water. They decided to take bath. The man was offended he was drowning. His friend went to rescue him. When he was recovering. He take a sincere and wrote on stone. Today my best friend saved my life. Then his friend asked why did you write on the sand after I offended to you and now you are writing on the stone? When a friend offended, we need to write on the sand, when the wind of the forget and forgive take it for erase. When something wonderful happened we need to recording on the heart's stone where no wind can disappear.

After that my sister felt better and thought that it can happen with all the relationships that we have. She said that she already did the same to someone else in her past. And now she can understand. Everybody continued making mistake and learning about what happen in our life

My Dream

by Herminia Morales

Many years ago, when I wrote one Essay about Mexico in the Middle School, my dream was to know this country. For this reason, when my grandson, Josue, told me: Prepares your suitcase because we are going to Mexico on vacations with the family together, I almost fainted from being able to see my dream comes true. We left to Mexico D.F. on January 4th 2023, and we arrived quite late, due a change on the fly departure time.

I had an idea that Mexico City was very messy like most Latin American cities are. But, I had surprised that it is very neat, clean and ordered. We visited Historic District in DF that is surrounded by beautiful building of baroque construction, the circle of Paseo de la Reforma where is the Freedom Monument with the Golden Angel on top which its floor is made of well-kept marble. It was very beautiful sitting and contemplate the architecture of the colonial era, to see many people visiting and walking around this country. A tour guide showed us many places, historic museum, and their own stories all beauty. She was a person very good knowing and her explanations are very funny. We visited the Frida Kalo's Museum and another interesting places, as the Building of Mail, a beautiful golden antique building. We took a boat ride through some huge lakes in Xochimilco. I did see a spectacular spring. And closed the day enjoying The Ballet of Mexico, in the Chapultepec Palace. All one lavish spectacle. As Three Kings Day was approaching, a lot of music was heard, there were typical Christmas decorations, multicolored lights, so much people outside, complete families with their children enjoying the good time and rejoicing everywhere. The January 6th day, is most important than Christmas's Day because in this day parents give their gifts to their children. We went to the Puebla city where there are 286 Catholic Churches, from Spanish Conquest time, all beautiful and sumptuous. We went to city Valladolid where there are 365 Catholic Churches, also very beautiful, and many markets with their own Mexican crafts but with high prices. Also, we went to Chichen Itzá, most important city of Maya Empire, and visited Pyramid of the Sun. My family was very happy seeing this majestic indigenous construction. Also we went to city Cancun, a city with really beautiful beaches. The vacations were very precious. And I gave thanks to my grandson, Josue and his family because I achieved my dream.



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**Hillsborough
County** Florida



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