

LOOK AT US!



A Newsletter of the Los Angeles Public Library
Adult Literacy Services
Edited by Ruth Gooley
Summer 2008

IT'S A MATCH!

PART 1

Liliana and Marcy

Marcy's Story
By Tutor Marcy Hiratzka

I began working with the Singleton Adult Literacy Center in the summer of 2005. Fresh out of college, I was looking to volunteer in LA, and found the perfect place to help others with one of my favorite subjects, English! I started out as an English Conversation Class Instructor and had a blast. It has been a delight to work with my current student, Liliana Ramirez. Liliana is from Colombia and has lived in Los Angeles for several years. Very sweet and eager to improve her English, Liliana has been making tremendous progress. Because she had had a previous tutor and could read and write fairly well, our main focus points have been speaking, listening, and pronunciation. Liliana may seem quiet and shy but in our sessions, she becomes creative and animated. One of our favorite activities to do is to bring in a picture book and cover the text so that Liliana has to make up the story based on the pictures. This strengthens her vocabulary, ability to create English dialogue, and gives us a chance to practice new words and pronunciation. Liliana is a quick learner and remembers the funny little expressions and gestures I use to teach and reinforce English sounds and spellings. Liliana and I have been working together for almost 4 months now and I look forward to watching her continue to flourish in all her endeavors.

Liliana's Story
By Learner Liliana Ramirez

My name is Liliana. I was born in Cali, Columbia. I came to the United States in Texas in February 1, 2003. I visited my cousin Martha for 20 days and I had a work opportunity in Los Angeles and moved here 5 years ago.

I always had the dream to speak and understand English very well. I began to study English at the Evan's school for one hour and a half in the morning. I needed to practice and I went to the Library in the Adult Literacy Program and found a different program.

The people who work in this Department showed to me different programs. I took Reading Upgrade, next Comprehension Upgrade, and now tutoring class.

I met my tutor Mary Keep and started Challenger 1 with her. She helped me all the time and I learned vocabulary words, read little stories, played Scrabble, and carried out many activities. We went to the market, restaurants, and a museum. I'm very grateful for her kindness and understanding.

I have difficulty communicating with people and pronunciation. Beverly recommended another tutor, Marcy Hiratzka and I started Challenger 2 with her. She is helping me and working hard to teach me to read and pronunciation.

A couple of months ago she showed to me some books of stories and she asked me about the tale and I had to tell her what happened. I enjoyed this session. I described some stories like *Babar*, *Madeline*, and *Curious George*. Marcy covers the words in the book and I look at pictures and use my imagination to explain the stories. Thank you for interesting me.

I improve my English step by step. I fight with myself to grow myself and I need self-confidence and security. I say oh God every day, thank you for my life and the people in the world.



Marcy and Liliana

PART 2

Takako's Story By Learner Takako Mizuno

I have been studying English reading and writing with my tutor, Suzy Howell since May, 2007. I moved to L.A. from Japan last year with my husband.

Since my friend recommended this program, I applied for it, and a few weeks later, I got a wonderful tutor. She teaches me not only reading and writing, but also American history and culture using some articles from newspapers and magazines. We also use some textbooks which, at first, I thought were too easy for me, but as I proceeded to the next lessons they became gradually more difficult, and now I learn a lot from these textbooks. I cannot say how much I appreciate Suzy and the people who support this program.

Suzanne's Story
By Tutor Suzanne Howell

Not knowing what to expect, I could not be more delighted to have Takako Mizuno as my first student with LAPL's Adult Literacy Program. A university graduate, Takako is in Los Angeles while her husband completes an M.B.A. program at Pepperdine. In addition to her English classes at Hughes Learning Center, we spend several hours together each week working with the Challenger series of workbooks as well as reading articles from newspapers and magazines. Takako also keeps a daily journal which has been helpful in teaching her proper grammar and punctuation. She amazed me (and herself) by filling a 150-page spiral notebook in just six months. We are about to embark on Challenger #3!

We have a great relationship, sharing background stories and learning about each other's culture. Takako has progressed from reading children's books and watching closed-captioned videos to reading Harry Potter and watching television game shows. Recipes, travel brochures, and current events are just some of the subject matter we have covered which makes each of our sessions fresh and exciting!

I am so proud to see how much she has learned and how far she has progressed during our time together, and I always look forward to our tutoring sessions. It has truly been a rewarding experience and has exceeded my expectations on every level.



Suzanne and Takako

CREATIVE CORNER
Learners write stories

Three Wishes
By Miguel Garcia

If I had the opportunity to have three wishes, I would think carefully about how to utilize them...

After meticulously probing my thoughts I decided to give my son the first wish. I made this decision because my child has been through a lot in the last fifteen months, let alone the last five years. I strongly feel - and even know - that my child would benefit from and the make the best out of a wish, as he is a sagacious young man. I know that deep in his heart he would appreciate what I have done for him. I can just see it in his eyes, feel his adrenaline flow; I can foresee him being triumphant in using his wish.

With regard to a second wish, I concluded that I needed to think outside the box and take this wish to the next level. I call it "the highest level of thinking excellence." I can't wait to articulate my second wish to all of you. As they say, "the sky's the limit" so here goes.

I would ask for a thousand more wishes (didn't see that one, did you?) The reason I would ask for so many wishes is that if I didn't make a wise and effective decision with the first wish, I could always make it up with the next and continually improve on each one. If necessary I would scrutinize each wish until my expectations and objectives have been fulfilled. Now the question is how am I going to use my wishes? Use your imagination...

My third wish is the deal breaker. I decided to be more sensitive about it ("three time's a charm," right?) You may think my last wish is outrageous, but I promise you it is not. This wish is not any ordinary wish. This wish is going to make up for every wish I have asked for. This wish is the whole enchilada, the Grand Slam, the back-up of all back-ups. This wish will make up for any other wish that was not successful. Are you ready? For my last wish, I wish for every wish to be reversed except for my first wish.

Passages
by Verta Rodriguez

I've been going to Bible Study for three years and learning to read for one year. Before, I would just listen during the Bible study.

One Sunday about three weeks ago, everybody was reading parts of a passage. Our of the blue, I asked the Pastor if I could read the next one. I did and everybody was happy because I read from the Bible for the first time. They clapped and hugged me.

I felt so excited to finally be able to read.

These are the passages that I read:

"He who seeks good finds goodwill, but evil comes to him who searches for it."
Proverbs 11-27

"I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."
Psalm 146-2

My Bicycle Ride
By Michael Singleton

Each week I ride my bicycle two times a day. I ride to Burger King in the morning and in the afternoon at lunch time sometimes on Saturday, I ride to the library or to the park. When I ride my bike people ask me how old is your bike? And I tell them it's about thirty years old. I love to

ride my bike because it's good exercise. My granddaughter love to ride with me sometimes. Maybe one day I will take her to the Beach on my bike. I have ridden alone from my house to Venice Beach years ago.

This just a little story about my many bike rides.

My Vacation
By Neil Uzzauto

My and my daughter's vacation was fun! When we got there house to say hello. Then we went to dinner for my sister's and nephew's birthdays. Then we went to the snow and went tubing. The next day they had a party and that was our trip to New Mexico.

What I Have Learned
By Ana Flores

In my job as a legal volunteer, I am practicing some words that I learned in my tutor class. These words make me feel more comfortable to speak and I am able to do a better job. Sometimes, I hear words that I don't understand, so I write them down and my tutor explains these in class. I also learn the pronunciation so I can use the words in everyday life. Two examples of these words are "audience" and "spouse".

A Very Special Story
Introduction
By Mary Anne Arensdorf

The following story touched me very much. It tells of Thu Pham's love for his family and his homeland, something we can all relate to in the deepest part of our being. It talks about how much he misses the familiar things of his former life: the farms, the celebration of the changing of the season, the celebration of the Vietnamese New Year. Longing and love resonate throughout this short story.

He gets on with his life as it is because being in the United States is best for his family. He is determined to speak English better and to improve his pronunciation. "Why is that" is one of his favorite questions. Whether it's referring to a particular vowel sound or a particular American custom, he's always trying to understand the underlying reason for the sound or custom.

Thu is a joyous man. Not morbid or brooding. The family celebrates life with extended family members often. They exchange food (each brings their specialties to family gatherings), and

little gifts. Sometimes they play Vietnamese card games. Always they have fun. He is a very special man. Truly I'm lucky to be helping him.

The Lovely House
By Thu Pham

This is really a lovely house built by my parents. This is the place where whole family lived together, where my children were born. We had a lot of beautiful & happy times with it.

It is a big and strong house located in an old town. There are many tourists who have come there to travel.

Here our parents worked, our sisters and brothers grew together.

It protected us against heavy rains of the winter, or from hot sunny lights of the summer.

It's near the river, so we have fresh air in the summer and it also gave us beautiful views.

It's next to two roads of the old town, so there are many tourists who walk in front of our house.

Vietnamese houses don't have a lot of rooms like American houses. But especially there is a place to observe ancestor cult. Here we decorated with respect. We always organize the traditional holidays there.

For Vietnamese, the house of parents is like a heart, we can't live without it. We are like red blood cells, going out and coming back after a period away.

Learners write poems too.

Womanness
By Monica Potts
Dedication to My Creator

To be a woman is to be a mother
To find a leading thought that is connected
To power
Power that is access through
Prayer that shows you the truth
The truth that guides you to growth
Growth that comes from experiences
Experiences that open up feelings
Be clear that feelings aren't love
Be clear that love is unconditional.

All of this comes from a place
A place that makes us safe and secure
A woman built up on hope
Hope givin' to those that are hopeless
A new way to live
Sharing concerns with others
With the only motive is to be helpful.

Haiku
Poetry by Susana C. J.

Stranger

Sweet love of mine come
Kiss my blue life with your smile
Stranger you have my heart

—

Where Are You

Cold of loneliness
Burn my soul since you been gone
Where are you? Come back.

—

My Beloved Husband

My beloved husband
What would I do without you?
I'll be nothing.

Reflections of a Future Poet
By Rachel McDon

In the future my desire is to write poetry. My intentions will be towards everyday surroundings. These ideas will cover some of nature's vast contributions on a daily and nightly basis.

The most impressive is the moon, whose glow spreads itself to the entire forest, beaches and fields. This brilliant glowing light is so important to me as I look way up towards the sky and see the stars twirling in the moonlight.

There are so many fantastic shapes of the moon. Sometimes there's a half moon and what some say a "quarter moon." But the best glowing light is the full moon!

Students Write Essays

Friendship
By Dror Hen,
a satisfied student of the writing class.

Having a best friend is important to keep our minds in correct proportion.

Firstly, we tend to share with our best friend our most intimate thoughts, which we don't do with the rest of our friends, our perspectives of the reality created by these thoughts more than other friends. Having a best friend, then, gives us a second opinion about these thoughts and then the opportunity to flesh them out.

Secondly, our most important decisions in life normally consider intimate factors of ourself that we share only with our best friend. Having a best friend allows us to make important decisions well.

Thirdly, with our best friend we incline to discuss our spouse, a thing that we tend less to do with the rest of our friends. It is important to have a second opinion concerning our spouse rather than to speak with him/her only.

That's why having a best friend is important for all of us.

Friendship: My Best Value
By Fernando F. Carmo

Some say, "Friends last forever." Having a good relationship with our friends is an important and priceless key to our lives, in all aspects. While several people prefer to have a great number of best friends, I prefer to have one who is the best of them all. Daiane is best and most long-lasting friend.

Daiane is the kind of person who always supports me when I need someone to talk to, even at 2 AM in a Friday night. She has been with me all the time, through good and bad moments, such as traveling across country or at my dog's funeral. Above all, she is the best cook I've ever known. She can cook an Italian pasta or pizza to cheer me up when I'm feeling blue. Having such a friend as Daiane helps us and also both spices and flavors our life. I couldn't live without my dear Daiane, the sweetest girl I know.

Best Friend
By Byeon Sung

Friendship is one of the most important qualities to make our lives abundant with joyful and fruitful relationships. My best friend Usanee exemplifies this notion. First of all, we have known each other since university. When one of my friends introduced her to me, I didn't expect how close we would become because she is from Thailand and I am from Korea. As time has gone by, we have been getting closer because we have the same goal, which was to have a successful life in the U.S.A. Beyond that, we have the same job. She started working at the hospital as an RN first and then introduced the facility to me. Therefore, I got a job easily in the U.S.A. When she was sick around one year ago, I took care of her. I am happy for Usanee's good news and sad for her bad news. With our friendship I feel life is more fruitful and abundant.

Cultural Diversity
By Sophie Liao

I am Taiwanese. Taiwan is a small nation that has a large population. This situation causes its people to be very aware of one another. Taiwanese people care what other people think of them. Social etiquette is very important. The needs of the group are more important than the needs of the individual.

To be a decent wife and mother, a woman must be aware of the social customs. This tradition applies more to a woman than to a man and can sometimes be very stressful. For example, a daughter-in-law has to be aware of what she needs to do on all the festive days. If you are the oldest daughter-in-law, you have to live with your parent-in-laws and continue the family name by producing a male heir. Taiwanese children are expected to study very hard in school and take a lot of exams.

In contrast, in the U.S. the individual is more important than the group. American people take their privacy very seriously. The culture is diverse, the people are very open minded and enjoy a freer life-style.

I enjoy my life in America, because I don't have to worry about those complicated social customs. Also, I have been fortunate enough to have a great tutor who patiently teaches me more than just English. She also shares the American culture with me which makes our study time more interesting. She is the best tutor I've ever met. I would like to express my gratitude to her. Thank you so much, Liz!

Students share proverbs

From Sherry Feng (South Korea)

Two monks have water to drink.
Three monks have no water to drink.

This means: because two monks can help each other. The one of three always wants to rest and let the other two monks do this job.

From Fernando Carmo (Brazil)

Don't make a storm in a glass of water.
In Portuguese: Ele ta fazendo uma tempestade em um copo d'agua

This means: don't over-react. Don't panic.

From Sung Byeon (South Korea)

Habits formed at the age of three will still be present at the age of eighty.

A very famous Korean adage, this idiom focuses on the fact that it is very hard to change someone's habits. For example, we can easily see that people who have bad table manners, like making silly sounds during meals, after many years when we eat again together we realize that they make the sounds again. Therefore, our ancestors pointed this out for their descendents.

From Jinny Kim (South Korea)

If I do something easy, I say, "Stn un juk muk kt." That means "piece of cake" in English. For example, when I swim, I think that. If my friend wants to help me, I say, "Stn un juk muk kt."

LETTERS TO DEAR SUSAN

Dear Susan,

I have been tutoring a student for over a year, and she makes little progress. She is motivated, but seems unable to grasp many concepts. For example, although she can designate the first and last sounds of words that she sees, she is unable to do so when she hears, but does not see, a word. Nor can she grasp the concept of rhymes.

I also have problems helping Spanish-speaking students differentiate between the short i and the short e sounds when I say them.

Perhaps you can address these problems at some time.

Thank you.

Fran

Dear Fran,

Thanks for writing. It is really frustrating for a person who loves words and their sounds to encounter a person whose processing of sounds is so different from her own.

Lots of Americans who don't have what my father would have called "an ear" for language can't distinguish between the sounds of merry, marry, and Mary. They all come out sounding like Mary. Similarly berry and Barry. Or they will confuse pen and pin. When wanting to write something, they'll ask to borrow a "pin."

These people are stronger at visual processing than they are at auditory processing. You can try the rhymes with words important to them, such as kiss and miss, and mess and less. And eventually, there will be some progress, but perhaps not as much as you wish.

But reading is a visual processing issue, so I would just go on, whether they are pronouncing the words correctly or not. If they understand the words and the syntax; if their fluency and comprehension improve, then I wouldn't worry about how they pronounce the words. There might be a hearing issue which you are not in a position to fix or a serious language processing issue which only a language therapist can help with.

Susan B. Casmier
Literacy Center Coordinator
Platt Branch

CONGRATULATIONS

To the following learners:

Margarita Hernandez recently took her citizenship exam and passed with flying colors! Tutor Gail Browning reports that she and her student spent many hours preparing and are both "VERY happy." Margarita's swearing in ceremony will be some time during the summer.

Refugio Lopez read an entire article in English from the LA Times newspaper. Tutor Ashley Hutchison is very proud of his improvement.

Mayulee Wilawan is a student from Thailand who is learning to read English with Literacy Center Coordinator, Carolyn Barelli. When asked what she liked about learning to read,

Mayulee said that learning to read makes her happy. She is halfway through her Learning English book and is currently working on lesson 10, which deals with health and fitness. Mayulee is a massage therapist who has clients who can communicate with her in English, telling her about pain in the back, arms, shoulders, neck, legs, etc. When she is not working, Mayulee does aerobic exercises at home to music and sometimes she goes dancing. She enjoys dancing and studying English. She is a joy to work with, so "happy learning" is experienced by both teacher and student.

To the following tutors, graduates of:

The October 2007 Tutor Training Workshop

Osborne, Gail (inadvertantly omitted)

The March 2008 Tutor Training Workshop

Cassy Cojak

Joyce Delaney

Alyssa Fong

Shilpa Gupta

Caroline Kim

Siang-Hui Lin

Ben Pack

Alaina Roche

William Tolliffe

Kerry Toolan



Tutors-in-training

“The training was so right. Every student is different. To see her [Ranjani's] progress in her writing is encouraging and delightful.”

By Diana Brookes, adult literacy tutor.

The April 2008 Tutor Training Workshop

Rachel Andersson

Carl Andreozzi

Priscilla Carde

Gary Crawford

Kareena de Vera

Alice Eisa

Lawrence Farnsworth

Nestor Omar Hernandez

Carla Kirvin

Patricia Lowry

Nina Moss

Paul Murphy

Naka Nathaniel

Jill Spuehler

Terry Whitaker

Christina Worthams

Julie McConville Zhang

The May 2008 Tutor Training Workshop

Maria Aquino

Elizabeth Arana

Sandi Ashford

Ellen Chris

Marisa Davis

Kirsten Gabbe

Paul Hanna

John Hogan

Jessica Judd

Jamie Lavin
Wesley Leong
Suzanne Martin
Ryoko Matsui
Lucas Michael
Janis Risch

Paula Roe
Sonyia Rouel
Ally Santaclara
Sonya Sayan
Roslyn Schonberger
Crystal Slone

Johanna Stein
Gayle Torres
Caroline Tracy
Amelia Velasco
Janet Weary



More tutors-in-training

The June 2008 Tutor Training Workshop

Dawn Anderson
Tom Aubreys
Sachi Auslander
Heather Brown
Rosa Cashiel
Doris Childs
Danita Eason
Timothy Ellis

Tiffany Estell
Jory Faermark
Lisa Fisher
Melinda Hamilton
Ebbins Harris
Monroe Jeffrey
Connie Luong
Gina McCord

Peaster McWin
Becki Royce
Nancy Saks
Molly Selvin
Carmelo Sita
Paola Valencia
Judy Wasson

A Special Congratulations to:

Jose Carrillo, who has been volunteering at the Singleton Adult Literacy Center at Central Library for the past year. Jose was commended by his co-workers at Bosley Medical Institute in Beverly Hills for his works and his contributions to adult literacy were highlighted in the company's nationwide newsletter, which highlights current events and good deeds.



Jose Carrillo and student Maria Lopez

Reflections of Adult Literacy Volunteers

My Experiences By Mary Anne Nelson

It has been my experience in 20 years as a volunteer Tutor trainer and Tutor that the Los Angeles City Library's Adult Literacy Program (ALP) is both needed and effective.

An adult learner needs help, not only in reading and writing, but also with confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline.

Following are some of the adults' accomplishments resulting from my tutoring: Passing the written driver's license exam; filling out the voter's registration form; writing a note of condolence; writing in a Mother's Day card; using alphabetizing skills to search in the yellow pages.

I feel my time has been richly rewarded. And doesn't the community benefit from those who are now aware, informed and involved?

Expectations By Aifer T. Akhlaque

My student and I had the same expectations about each other even before we met. My fact sheet on Eun showed her to be older than she actually was, whereas she had been informed by her friends that tutors are usually old. HUH? Well needless to say that a warm bond was formed within the first 5 minutes of meeting each other. And since then it has only strengthened. Eun already had good reading skills when I started tutoring her. But her pronunciation was and still is strongly influenced by her native language. However, her writing skills have vastly improved over the past 5 months. Not only is she writing in proper paragraphs but her power of expression and the vocabulary she is using is so much better.

Working in harmony together we have both brought out the best in each other. She has helped me to understand how to overcome adversity once your mind is set on a specific objective. And I hope I am helping her to reach her goals step by step, word by word, and skill by skill.

We still have some way to go. As Robert Frost so aptly put it:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

CLASSES:

Adult Literacy Services are proud to offer the following classes. Please call the appropriate Center for more information.

Singleton Adult Literacy Center at the Central Library:

English conversation class: Monday-Thursday 3:30-5
Friday-Saturday 2-3:30

Writing class: Monday & Tuesday 2-3:30

Mid-Valley Regional Branch:

Conversation class: Wednesday 12:30-2
Thursday 3:30-5

Platt Branch

Conversation class: Monday 11-12
Thursday 6:30-7:30

THANK YOU

Adult Literacy Services would like to thank the staff for their invaluable help at the following branches, where Literacy Centers are located: Baldwin Hills, Cahuenga, Central, Echo Park, Exposition Park, Jefferson, Junipero Serra, Lincoln Heights, Mid-Valley, Pacoima, Panorama City, Pio Pico-Koreatown, Platt, Robert Louis Stevenson, Robertson, Venice, Washington Irving, Watts, and Wilmington.