



Vines of **TRUTH**

A Creative Writing Anthology

Volume Six



Literacy KC
Changing lives beyond words



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Vines of Truth

A Creative Writing Anthology
from Literacy KC

previously Writers for Readers Anthology

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Literacy KC
Volume Six, 2024

Vines of Truth, previously known as Writers for Readers, is an annual print and online publication that features the work of Literacy KC students. Print issues are available for free in limited numbers.

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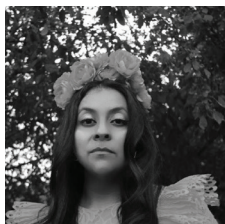
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2024 Visiting Writers

Literacy KC was delighted to invite local writers to lead creative writing lessons with our students. Each writer provided their own writing prompts, and these prompts inspired the work our students created. Many thanks to our 2024 visiting writers!

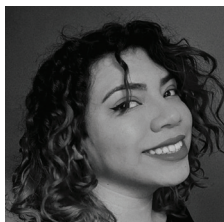


Jessica Ayala is an Indigenous Colombian Two-Spirit multi discipline artist. Miss Ayala is a spoken word poet, published author, musician, and writer-in-residence alumni of Charlotte Street Foundation. Their work is a fusion of her heritage merging oral tradition, poetry, song, and Native percussion. Ayala immigrated to the United States at the age of three, publishing her first series of poems for the Young Authors Conference at the age of eight. Her current poetry has been published in two anthologies winning an Honorable Medal in the 2017 International Latino Book Awards. Miss Ayala is the recipient of the 2018 Best Kansas City Spoken Word Artist Award.



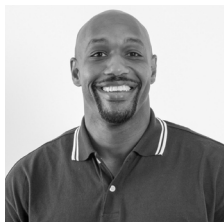
Melissa Ferrer Civil (she/they) lives on Kansa, Kaw, Kickapoo and Oceti Sakowin lands (Kansas City, MO). They are a Christian, queer, Haitian and Latinx poet, educator and organizer who battles with mental illness. Their current obsessions are examining our state of exile and finding the way home. You can find their work in *The Plentitudes*, *JMWW journal*, *Zin Daily* and elsewhere. They are a Charlotte Street Studio Resident, a Heartland Arts KC fellow, a Chrysalis institute alumni and the first Poet Laureate of Kansas City, MO. Melissa is also the founder of the arts and organizing event series A Nation In Exile.

Melissa Ferrer
Civil bio cont.



You can find out more about them on their website www.melissaferrerand.com and follow them on IG: @melissaferrerand.

Waleska Font, a Venezuelan poet and multidisciplinary artist, channels her immigrant experiences into promoting bilingual poetry for social justice. Her visual art debut at Tangled Roots and creation of the Sacred Crop mark her diverse artistic endeavors. Currently an artist resident at Artscope, she shares her passion as an educator. As program director of the Bilingual Poetry Program, she fosters cultural dialogue. Notable presentations include exhibitions in Mexico and festivals in Kansas City.



Ray Lucas: I AM a student advocate for adult education, youth coach, and mental health specialist. I write to escape the dark, which generates worlds that my imagination alone can draw up to see. As Ralph Waldo Emerson stated, “The writer is an explorer. Every step is an advance into a new land.” These same writings have led me to win contests because people told me my writing was poetic, still not fully understanding the strength of my writings, I’ve been blessed to host anthology classes and even performed great shows in front of large crowds. I write only because there is a voice within me that will not be stilled.



Glenn North is the Director of Inclusive Learning and Creative Impact at the Kansas City Museum. He received an MFA in Creative Writing from UMKC and is the author of *City of Song*, a collection of poems inspired by Kansas City’s rich jazz

Glenn North
bio cont.

tradition and the triumphs and tragedies of the African American experience. He is a Cave Canem fellow, a Callaloo creative writing fellow and a recipient of the Charlotte Street Generative Performing Artist Award. His ekphrastic and visual poems have appeared in art exhibitions at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the American Jazz Museum, and the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art. Glenn is also an adjunct English professor at Rockhurst University and is currently the Poet Laureate of the 18th & Vine Historic Jazz District.



Dylan Pyles is an organizer and writer from Kansas City, Missouri. He's a co-founder of Liberation Lit, an organization that sends books to incarcerated people in Missouri and Kansas prisons.



Mary Silwance is an Egyptian immigrant living in Kansas City and is a mother of three daughters. She serves on the editorial teams of Whispering Prairie Press and Flying Ketchup Press, teaches EAL at Penn Valley and is a KCAI writing adjunct. You can find her publications, radio, and zoom presentations as well as workshop offerings at <https://www.marysilwance.com>. Mary's first full-length collection of poetry, *We Remember Ourselves*, was released in January 2024.

Editor's Note

These last two years, editing this anthology and organizing the Visiting Writer Series has provided me with intense joy, surprise, and humility as I've seen students explore writing and open up about their lives. Writing requires vulnerability, innovation, heart, and introspection, but the rewards of these efforts are manifold, and we are so grateful and proud of our students for sharing their stories and ideas in this volume.

This year's anthology features the work of more than 100 Literacy KC students from our English-Language Learning program and our Adult Basic Education & High School Equivalency program. Their work speaks to the vast experiences, cultures, traditions, and countries that make up who they are. Literacy KC's students represent the voices of more than 65 countries across the world, but they are also a vital part of Kansas City's communities and voices, too.

This year's group of visiting writers provided wonderful and invigorating creative writing lessons and prompts, and I am eternally grateful for their participation in this program. We are so delighted to share this volume of *Vines of Truth* with you and hope that you enjoy it. Happy reading!

—Chloe Chun Seim, Editor

About the Editor



Chloe Chun Seim (she/her) serves as the Development Specialist at Literacy KC. She is the author of the George Garrett Fiction Prize-winning novel, *Churn* (Texas Review Press, 2023). *Churn* was also a finalist for the Publishing Triangle Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction. Her work has appeared in *LitMag*, *Potomac Review*, *McNeese Review*, and others. She received her MFA from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Participating Literacy KC Instructors

This project would not be possible without our wonderful instructors who facilitate these writer visits and creative writing among their students.



Melissa Acton
ELL Instructor



Heather Mecham
HiSET Instructor



Dianne Brewington
HiSET Instructor



Michaela Pezza
ELL Instructor



Jodi Garbison
ELL Instructor



Emily Spradling
ELL Instructor



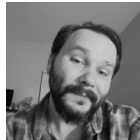
Randy Holt
HiSET Instructor



Dylan Straughn
ELL Instructor



Julie Mackie
HiSET Instructor



Steven Swope
ELL Instructor



**Melinda
Mason-Brown**
Head ELL Instructor



**Renee
VanZandt-Priolo**
ELL Instructor

Notes on This Year's Creative Writing Class Visits & Anthology

Literacy KC is about providing building blocks for our students to advance in their lives. Some of these are language acquisition, career certificates or high school equivalencies. As important as these things are, they are not the only features of a full and happy life. Art is crucial to mental, emotional and even physical health. It is joy and pain, comedy and tragedy, dark and light. It opens avenues for feeling and expression that run deeper than the surface.

I am grateful to Chloe for making space for art and written word at Literacy KC, for the visiting writers who have opened our eyes to new ways of expression and to the students who have stretched themselves in new ways in a new language to put their art on paper.

**—Emily Spradling, returning
participating instructor at Literacy KC**

Teaching is a true joy and gift that I get to experience every single day while in the classroom. No matter the age or academic level, I believe that surrounding myself with students as they challenge themselves and grow is one of the most rewarding things. Every student has specific talents and gifts that they have been equipped with. The real joy of teaching is found through them. The ones that I learn so much from. Who I am always inspired by. The ones who always, without even meaning it, find a way to lead me to continue to learn and grow. My students are a gift to me!

**—Melissa Acton,
participating instructor at Literacy KC**

Notes on This Year's Creative Writing Class Visits & Anthology (cont.)

It takes a special kind of person to be able to move to another country. To have the courage, the strength, and the will to leave behind everything that is familiar. To leave loved ones, established careers, ancestral homes. To cut oneself from his or her own roots and foundation to fumble and tumble into temporary disorder, disadvantage, and discomfort at the possibility of a better life for themselves or their family sometime in the future.

It's so easy to do nothing, while it's so difficult to change. And while these immense changes are shaking life's core, these beautiful and brilliant people patiently (or not-so-patiently) sit for hours each week to carefully untangle each thread knotted in the often absurd and ridiculous complexities of what is the English language. Because unfortunately, decades of experience speaking Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, Arabic, Dari, Somali, Swahili, or any other language does not qualify one to easily thrive in a society that primarily speaks only English.

Every day, my students impress me and remind me how strong and determined they are when numerous obstacles block their paths or get in their way. Each one has sacrificed something special in order to be here, and each one continues to climb towards their own goals and dreams.

I truly believe that we've only scratched the surface here on the stories that could be told and on the ideas that could be shared. Everyone has a unique perspective and a set of experiences that contribute to the grand tapestry of collective wisdom which Literacy KC brings together in each of its programs and classrooms every day. It's these writings that light the path toward increased collaboration, empathy, and understanding where everyone has value, and everyone has a voice.

**—Dylan Straughn, returning
participating instructor at Literacy KC**

Notes on This Year's Creative Writing Class Visits & Anthology (cont.)

I can't write, Teacher! I'm not a writer, especially in English! These were the responses I got from my students when I told them we were participating in the school anthology. Thanks to our guest writing speaker, Melissa Ferrer Civil, students' eyes were opened to possibilities. People who initially felt insecure about their writing skills, started putting thoughts to paper. She initially encouraged them to write in their first language to capture ideas and to write with fluidity and fluency. After that, writers decided how to translate their piece, literally or capturing the general meaning. Rather than a daunting writing task, students expressed a sense of empowerment and release as they found their voice through writing, even therapeutic for some. It takes courage to share your story, your writing. I'm super proud of my students this year for trusting the process. I'm proud of them for their willingness to be vulnerable. I'm proud of them for telling stories only they can tell and proving themselves wrong. They CAN write!

**—Jodi Garbison, returning
participating instructor at Literacy KC**

Music is Life

by Julio Nunez

I love listening to music, specifically rap. There are hundreds of music styles, but you can identify yourself with one of them, and you can relate. When I listen to rap, conscious rap, there is always a lyric that impacts me.

When the singer has a message in his song, it can blow your mind depending on the story. Music helps you to calm down, to think about many things, depending on the story. I love rap because it's art, and I can enjoy good music.

The Man Who Could Predict the Weather *by Carlos A. Garcia*

Once upon a time, Ortencio Pichinte was 65 years old. He was famous in the region, and every chief of every village around Panchizalco traveled long distances just to see Ortencio and ask him how the coming winter was going to be. Based on what Ortencio said, they made plans on what kind of vegetables and cereals they would plant and what day to start preparing the land, because Ortencio was exact in every prediction he made, even though at that time he could barely move. His legs were twisted and swollen. His knees started to hurt long ago as he walked to the hill where his house was and still is.

Ortencio doesn't remember the exact day he started to predict the weather, but what he remembered was a day in May when the rains started, and the trees turned green, and there appeared every kind of bird. One morning, he woke up with a lot of pain in his knees, and he got out of the bed and walked outside the house and saw the sky, and he said, "It is going to rain today."

That afternoon, it rained like the sky was falling apart. It was a rare feeling for him, because when he made the prediction the sky was totally blue, and the sun was very bright. Since that day, he found out that in the mornings when his knees hurt it always rained, even if it was in summertime when normally it never rains.

When Ortencio said today it is going to, it rained and the people started to see him like a kind of shaman with magical powers. He didn't tell his secret to anyone. People started to ask him if it was going to be good weather during the week before planning long trips when they had to walk for a few days.

As the time passed, he learned how to predict the weather of the month, and later he learned to predict it for the whole year as his legs' pain was getting worse.

He always got the exact predictions every time.

A Car is a Human

by Albaro Reynoso

A car is part of my life

It makes my life easy and I compare it to a human

Because a human has many parts and a car does too.

A human has a heart, a car has a motor.

A human has eyes, a car has lights.

A human has feet, a car has tires.

A human has a brain, a car has a computer.

A human has blood and a car has gasoline... etc!!

Love

by María Weda

I love all there is in the world.
I love to start the day and eat my breakfast.
I love to drive to visit my grandchildren.
I love to make dinner for my husband.
I love watching TV after eating dinner.
I love to take showers.
I love to go lay down and sleep very well.
I love to start another day with love.

To My Sisters

by Sandra Traetta

No matter how time goes
We'll always be there
Where the laughs are eternal
And the fun never stops
Where the distance doesn't exist
And we still share our toys.

No matter how time goes
We'll always be playing
Where the friendships are eternal
And the happiness never stops
Where the tears don't exist
And we still share our love.

For You, My Miracle

by Thilleli Akli

God has put you in my heart before your birth.
I dream of me holding you in my arms.
I have faith in God above and I know you are coming.
I have been waiting for so long because you are worth the wait.
I am sure you will make my life bright and shine.
Come baby, to fill me with hope and joy.
I have too much love to offer you, darling.

Sisters, Life's Gift

by Yosybel Alfonzo

Have you ever thought about a big life gift?
I could say sisters are a huge one.
Sisters are the friends who you can always play with,
And always have sleepovers.
Sisters build memories that are not destroyed
By time or distance.
Sisters are a model that teaches you how to cook,
But even better, how to live,
How to avoid mistakes, how to avoid pain.
Sisters are happiness, smiles, and laughter
That make your life better
Sisters are support that make your tears
Less dense and life lighter.
Sisters share their clothes and show you
How to shine bright, share their shoes and
How to walk in this life.
If you wanna say with a word, what is God's gift
You can say Sisters!
And I have six!

The Lights

by Wen He

This January morning was quite cold and wet in Kansas City, which was reported to be the coldest on record at -13 F degrees. Through the window, I saw the white smoke rising in the air from my neighbors' chimneys. What is more, in the backyard, groups of small birds huddled together in the lower branches trying to keep warm. "Poor birds, what can I do for them?" my daughter asked with a concerned look on her face. "They will survive the cold," I replied. Just then, a warm feeling of appreciation came over me as I realized how grateful I was for my warm home.

In the evening, I leaned back in my chair by the window. The snow plow passed by; it had left behind a thin coating of ice on the road. The street lights were already on. But further up the street I noticed it seemed particularly dark. *What's wrong? That street light is not working, well, it might need repair,* I thought. I waited a week, but the dark corner still remained the same. At that time, I knew I could not wait any longer. I did not want anyone to slip and fall because they could not see the ice-covered road in the dark. Immediately, I searched online for the correct department to contact and then gathered the location information they might ask me in order to complete the repairs.

As I expected, I spoke with the department around eleven the next morning. I was excited and curious when the light would be fixed. When I returned home around three later the same day, I was surprised to see a worker working on the light! Really excellent service, I thought. So that street corner light would illuminate the area soon and again help people walking on the street after dark.

The next day, I felt a sense of pride as I watched through my window and enjoyed seeing the neighbors walking their dogs and kids playing. Recalling the scene when I first came to the USA, my early experience moving here

always stays in my mind. I was nervous about responding to people's greetings like "How are you doing?" But after three years of studying with Literacy KC, I feel more confident in my English speaking and listening. Sincerely, I really appreciated all the people's help along the way.

Thank you Literacy KC. You have taught me a lot. My English, my job skills, and my community awareness have been greatly improved. I would like to thank my teachers, Emily Spradling, Mary Kay Morrow, Mylinda Scott, Amy Coffman, and Lynelle. I apologize for not remembering all the teachers' names. They are all intelligent and very dedicated. Literacy KC helps people who need it. They have felt like a warm light illuminating our path to a bright future.

Lies

by Francisco Santana

Lies take time underneath your cry
Lies tear us apart like a sentence to a crime
 Lies, why?
It wasn't enough pain to try
Lies' insane fears to hide

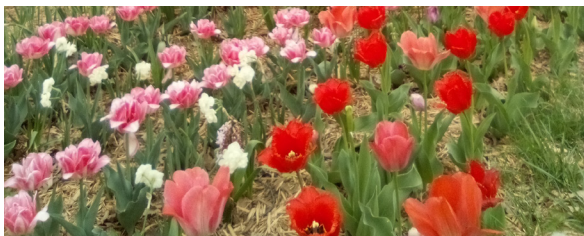
Tikafe Cho

by Primeflore Dathus

I remember tikafe cho in the morning in my grandmother's house and her hospitality. When someone passed over the street, "Do you need to drink coffee?" Its coffee had a secret that we never knew. It gives you a good feeling and a large smile. You need to dance bel compas. Cafe cho is like coconut water. when you drink it, you feel the sand on your feet and the sun on your skin. Grandmother's coffee makes you happy all day. She put heart and love. Tikafo cho le matin is more than a drink, it is a story.

Early Tulips

by Mei Schulze



Last late autumn, I planted several kinds of tulips.

Unexpectedly, this spring, in mid-March, they began to blossom.

their flowers one by one,
their body is swaying, swagging,



The surrounding area is not green through the grass, and those did not germinate, there are no more green leaves.

There are ONLY THE TULIPS. They are the most beautiful, bright, more color and jumping...

Vines of Truth

The red Garden Fire, leaves such as red satin: smooth, oily, fine wire.

I really do not know how it is growing, weaving. All the leaves of the flower edge, how it is cut into fine hair edges, and the Tulip's heart in the center with the black ink finishing pen, just like the butterfly... Not only red, followed one by one, deep light red, proud mixed, purple, yellow, DAFFODIL white cheerfulness, and the pure white, like milky white, is as milk sweet thick....

Is a group of colorful butterflies, dancing in front of the door,

Someone came to take a picture, a bird came to patronize, and actually saw a small bee! Where did it come from?

Nature's god hand, he waved, along with the spring breeze, green vegetation;

Now, as soon as he blows, he blows open this lovely, lovely little piece, this little piece of tulip, floating in the air, is a burst, pleasant, fragrant.

Love them!

Musical Brides

by Natacha Dathus

I remember a music if ayay in my mind,
"Jezu ou renmenm ampil."
When I see my life, I realize
Jesus is good for me, and you love me so much.
And I can't explain why?
When I am very sad, he touches me and I remember
He is here when I am lost for the way
Or I want to take a wrong way he takes my hand
And says to me, follow me when I think I am alone.
He says to me, I am here and I have your life
In my hands, don't be afraid.
Oh Jesus, thank you for your love.
My poem is inspired by song and
Resonates my life experience

Five Artworks

by Isabel Flores Hernandez

Originally from Chiapas, Mexico, I graduated from the Chiapas Visual Arts School with a focus on painting. I also attended Arts Education as a part of my studies and as a result, I was able to teach classes in Visual Arts for children. My inspiration comes from studies regarding race, class, and gender perspective, identity, myths and legends of pre-Hispanic Mexican and Western culture. But I also have a deep love for dogs and cats and paint pet portraits. I have participated in collective exhibitions in Mexico and the USA.

I believe in artistic creation as a means of expression to connect and transform towards new possibilities.



“Taxonomy of a butterfly girl who just wanted to fly,” by Isabel Flores, Mixed media on canvas. 2023.



"To Estelita" by Isabel Flores, Mixed media. 2023.



"Don't Give In Mi Prietita", by Isabel Flores, Mixed media.
2023.



“Máscaras,” by Isabel Flores, Oil on wood. 2021.



"Who am I?," by Isabel Flores, Oil on canvas. 2023.

Two Poems

by Isabel Flores Hernandez

My Hair

They used to say *ipeínate!*, *comb your hair!*
But my combed hair meant *átalo*, tie it up,
and I just wanted to let it be free, *libre*,
as tangled, *tan enredado*, as my mestiza roots,
as thick as my mom's and abuelita's hope,
as dark as the night letting you see the stars.

Language Garden

In my language garden I have three plants,
a corn plant, *planta de maíz*, which I planted first,
a beans plant, *planta de frijoles*, and
a pumpkin plant, *planta de calabaza*,
this is a mutual relationship,
in my country is called “*milpa*”,
Where my ancestors, my *abuelos* used to get food.
I take care of these sister plants,
so my mother tongue, Mexican Spanish,
is the corn plant, which provides to her sisters a
sustenance to grow, *para crecer*,
to bloom, *para florecer* and to harvest, *cosechar*.
The roots still there, as tangled
as my tongue feels speaking English,
but letting me grow, *crecer*, every day.

Languages

By Aman Claude Hounkpe

Being bilingual or multilingual opens up new cultural and social opportunities or experiences and can help have a career in a globalized world. It's pretty cool, amazing, attractive, to speak two or more languages in conversation, until your brain starts malfunctioning and you forget the words or how to speak. However, bilingualism can also lead to language confusion, learning difficulties, challenges, social, emotional difficulties. Sometimes it's a struggle to speak one language in the professional career and that can change your personality when you speak in a different language.

A Little Advice to My 10-Year-Old Nephew

by Ibrahima Diop

Have confidence in yourself.

Learn to love and respect each other mutually.

Realize that you are a person,

With a lot of incredible potential,

Who deserves great things.

Wherever you are, never forget where you came from

And that your parents do a lot of things to put you in very good conditions.

So, we ask you to do one thing, to work hard at school.

KC 24008260

by Omer Gurashi

I was in the bathroom getting ready to go to work. The shift starts at 11pm; I always leave at 10pm. While in the bathroom I heard a gunshot.

With the many sounds of fireworks here, you may not be able to differentiate between the sound of a gunshot and fireworks. Indigenous people can.

I made a cup of coffee, then went out to my car. I started up the car engine, and I waited a little while for the oil to enter the engine.

Where I live, there is a green sign. It says "Brush Creek BLVD Virginia 1300 E AVE." I know the street well.

At the Main Street, I stopped for a bit, until I paid close attention if there was a car cut off the road from the right.

When I looked north, I saw a person lying beside the road.

"Do you need help, sir? Sir, do you need help?"

A faint voice came out of him. I couldn't hear anything from his voice.

I didn't understand what was he saying.

Then I looked under my car. Blood stained the place. He's injured.

I put the car backed, and I stood next to him. He fell on his left side. His phone was lit under his chest.

There was a lot of blood on the screen phone. He was calm and did not complain or shout.

Then he said, "Sir, call my wife."

"Why we don't call 9-1-1?"

"Sir, call my wife."

The phone was full of blood, lying under him. The name panel appeared, It had spots of blood covering some of the letter. His finger was on a number with the words written on it, "My wife."

He pressed the number and then gave me the phone.

"Hello."

"Hello."

"Your husband was injured and he needs help, madam."

I said again, "Your husband was injured."

"Could you repeat what you said?"

"Your husband?"

"Your English is broken."

"It's not the right time to talk about my English."

"Where are you from?"

"I'm from Africa, Sudan."

"Give me someone who speaks English."

"No one's here."

"Find someone."

Those seconds we were arguing about language, maybe it would have saved his life. He was silent and in a lot of pain.

I didn't make the right decision. I was waiting for someone to make the decision for me. In my own decision. I realized it's better to call 9-1-1. I was afraid of responsibility. I was waiting for someone to make an escape on my behalf.

I ran into the cold streets looking for someone.

"Nobody."

There were large, spacious, uninhabited buildings.

"Wig shop."

"Gas station."

"Tax library."

"Where are you now?"

"I'm next to the gas station. Before the Jewish Vocational Services."

"What is the name of the street?"

"I really don't know."

There was a speeding car coming out of the intersection. Stopped next to me.

"Do you need help?"

"I am looking for someone to talk on the phone. Someone was injured. Could you talk to his wife?"

The car left the main street, then turned to a side street, then returned to the main road again. It revolved in a closed circle, and I'm behind the car holding the phone. Consume what time remains.

Then a white woman got out of the car. She left her dog behind her in the car. In harsh tone, ordered the dog, "Stay in the car."

Then she stopped over the injured person.

"He was shot."

"What is your name, sir? Sir, what is your name? Is he breathing?"

"Yes, he is alive"

"It's better to call 9-1-1."

She talked to the wife, and then described the place and the street to the police. The police car stopped. While she was still talking on the phone describing the place, the police cars continued to come. A red ambulance car stopped. Stretcher brought out the sick carrier. They surrounded the area with a circle of yellow tape. He was "checked." Then they put their gear back in the car. He left... I only knew him thirty seconds ago. He was struggling for life, but now he has died. I wish he was alive. Police cars continued. There are some people, seeing the police makes them nervous and depressed. I have concerns about the police, a long history of fabrication.. If they don't find the culprit, "We have one."

In the American Film Production Network, if they don't find the culprit, the Color was committed the crime.

There was a lot of questions, but they were indescribably polite. They didn't look like that "police." They speak three or four different languages, arranged athletes, and they are handsome, too.

"They offer help."

They stuck a lot of tape on the body of the deceased. He looked dry, Nothing moved about him. Language deprived him of his last moments.

Does he want to say goodbye to his wife? *See you in another life.*

Maybe he wanted to say, "Donate all my money."

"Give the house to my daughter."

I really do not know, but I have the worst feeling. His death is unlike any other consolation. No funeral will be held for him. He left quietly without screaming and noise.

I wish I had not obeyed him, I wish I was the one calling.

Maybe he was a good husband, good person, painting the roads with red color. He has become just a number to unsolved case.

Just a drunkard, full of drugs. Kills the best people.

I write to share my pain with others.

Death without cause insulates the interior. If it had been a normal death, I would have gotten over it. Kills people for trivial reasons. It's shameful.

Wrong color. Wrong color of clothes. Skin color.

Looking carefully, all of them represent reasons for killing people. One person is killed every day for no reasons in this quiet city.

Murder happens, but there are "reasons." *Tribe and control. Honor issues. Revolution and the state ignorance. Religion.*

Death came, and the causes came, and life goes on.

If I had left early, I could have saved his life.

Despite the beauty of those streets, they are scary, violent, and frustrating.

Language can solve many problems. It can save the lives of others. My limited language contributed to the departure of a person.

You can deal low-key language, buy and sell, but it will not help solve urgent problems.

You will still cry and laugh in your native language... Nothing will change.

"If you do not provide assistance, don't ask for it. Avoid helping others in such circumstances." A despicable thing.

You should stand up to help those in need in such circumstances.

Maybe you'll need it some day. One day, maybe you need it.

Healing Memories

by Diana Ortiz

I know I could say many things to you, little Diana.
Through my words I would like to heal your heart.
One of those things is that you didn't have to carry
things that didn't belong to you,
That did not allow you to be free during the most
Important time of your life in this world.
Your fears, insecurities, and emotions were too small to
suffer as big ones.
Girl, if you only knew that God would always
take care of you.
The best thing you have done is give Him your heart, and
Allow Him to heal it.
At the end of it all, you are still here, living now with purpose
and with a great future
Ahead of you.
Everything that has happened has shaped the great woman
you are today.

Coming to the US

by Absia Raymond

In my country, in Haiti, I was an academic. I was studying agronomy at Notre Dame University in Haiti. I left during the fifth year, and it was the last level to complete my task. In my opinion, it is a huge sacrifice. I let my years crumble like this to be on another step, new language, new culture, and new attendance. However, there is no age to learn. I will embark on my studies no matter where I will be. It's so hard to pay for all these years of study and not finish it. As I just said in a few words, I consider it as a huge sacrifice. I had no choice to come to the United States. I was obliged. My parents put me in one of the prestigious universities in my country. I am aware of that, and this is expensive these days. Sending me to the United States also means that their sacrifices are really enormous. They want me to succeed. So, I sacrificed my studies and the love of my family.

Fight to Survive

by Ahmad Hamandosh

When I was young, my dreams were big.
Where I would have loved to become a famous soccer player
And I wanted to be a doctor to treat the poor for free,
And, and, and, and, and,
When I grew up I was shocked by a bitter reality.
It was difficult to balance work, study, and hobbies
In a country controlled by a large group of thieves,
I mean the president and the government in my country, Syria.
I had to work long hours to be able to obtain only
The necessities of life and I was able to achieve only
Simple things of what I dreamt of and tried for 25 years.
Life has become more difficult and the thieves in my country
Have become more numerous and greedy.
Which led to people screaming in the streets
Demanding that the injustice against them be lifted.
This angered the government, and the matter gradually
Developed until their level of madness reached
The point of bombing cities with missiles and planes.
Which forced me to leave for Lebanon after I lost
Everything. I remained there for about eight years
Working hard trying to regain a small part of what I lost
In my country.
Suddenly, I had the opportunity to live
In the most Wonderful country in the world.
And again, I left everything and came here to start again.
After I become 40 years old.
Finally, I hope not to lose anything here.
Especially the wonderful people I have met in the USA.

Different Reality

by Clivens Pharelus

The US is a place many people would like to come to, especially people from my country, because they always say, “The US is God’s country, the US is paradise.”

Every vacation he came, it was always fun to wait for my uncle, because he always brought me Spring soap, and I knew that once he came, I would have money to put in my pocket. Many people from the US always bring this soap.

The reason why my uncle left the country is because he was persecuted politically, but he never spoke about the reality of the country.

It’s other friends who are always telling me how well they live here, which always made me want to come to “Paradise,” because that’s how they always spoke about it.

It was with joy and sadness that I was leaving the country, my family, my friends. I was happy to come, but at the same time I was very sad because I knew everything was changing.

I was very happy to sit in the US destination plane. After we landed in Miami airport, I saw everything completely differently. I began to feel that what they used to say was in the past, because I missed my flight to KC.

Because I was not familiar with the Miami airport system, I spent three days sleeping inside the airport. I missed my flight three times and the airport was really busy. While I was inside, it was fun to watch the people running because they couldn’t find their gates.

They didn’t give me problems even if I was sleeping on the chairs.

There was a subway that I went to eat inside and people asked me if I worked here. They asked because I went there every day.

After I arrived in KC, finding my family was joy.

After a few months, I started to adapt to the system, and I saw that it is different from what people say. You have

access to many things, but I noticed that not everyone is enjoying the American dream...

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF COMING TO THE US MATCHED REALITY?

by Angel Loaiza

Insights

- This country is beautiful but I have to work all the time.
- Everything is very expensive.
- The good thing is that I have a quiet life, there aren't any crimes or thefts.
- Another good thing is that I have more work possibilities.
- Living alone is very complicated.
- I can have a healthy life if I avoid the enormous amount of fast food that exists.

REALITY CHECK: MY US ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE

Like everything in life, there are good and bad aspects. Therefore, I've had pleasant experiences, as well as some not-so-positive ones. Starting with the good, this country is truly beautiful; I would need a lifetime to fully explore all it has to offer.

Its culture is different from that of my home country, Ecuador, but the people are very welcoming. In the short time I've been living here, I've formed very positive impressions of Americans; they not only try to understand me but also extend their friendship.

Something that brings me peace of mind is the low rate of theft or crime, allowing me to walk in parks or go to the supermarket without any fear.

Shifting gears, to live here it's necessary to have at least one job because things are quite expensive, starting with housing. This leads me to a very important point: companionship. It's crucial to have friends to share expenses with, especially when it comes to rent. Although adapting at first can be difficult, you soon realize there are many opportunities to excel. All it takes is the willingness and effort to learn and improve every day.

My Parents are My Leaders in Life

by Bitendo Rashidi

My parents are my leaders in my life because they started to lead me on my first day in this world.

When I was born at NUNDU hospital, FIZI Zone, Province of south Kivu in Zaire, which is now called the Democratic Republic of Congo, my mother started breastfeeding me for my health.

When I was kid, my parents fed me with different kinds of food.

They have shown me how to wear clothes. They have taken care of me, they have shown me how to start walking. I learned a lot of things from my parents. I learned how to eat by myself, how to wear clothes, how to wear shoes, how to take baths, and how to wash my clothing. My parents have taught me or have shown me different relationships with their parents, with their brothers and sisters.

Because of my parents, I have known my paternal and my maternal grandparents, I have known my uncles, my aunties, and other family relationships.

They have continued to lead me when they have shown me what is good for me to do in my life and what is bad. They wanted me to be a good child and have good behavior. In that context, they taught me to be a good child, even a smart one. They have taught me how I can respect them in doing what they have told me to do and not do what they have told me to not do.

They have taught me how to love other people and be a good child in helping others. They have taught me the words of God. They taught me the Ten Commandments of God, which are written in the Bible in the books of Exodus chapter 20:1-17, and in Deuteronomy 5:6-21. They have shown me the way to look for my God Jesus Christ by going with me to the church, and have taught me more about religion.

They showed me another important thing in my

life when they decided to send me to school for more education.

From school, I have learned how to count, how to read, and so on. And when I had assignments to do at home or homework, my parents helped me to understand more about the lessons from school and do my best. They advised me to take time at home to read different lessons from school for me to know more about different teachings of different teachers.

Even now, they continue to lead me because they advise me how to live with other people, and if I have problems, they advise me how I can resolve them.

Yes, my parents are my leaders who lead and guide me to go in the good way and look for the truth.

I have another leader who leads and guides me in my life. He is my security camera. He saw me when my mother was at the hospital for my birth.

My security camera has seen me everywhere in my childhood.

When I was ten years old, he saw me and guided me to his spiritual life. He knows everything that I did in my past life. What can I hide from him? I can't hide anything from him, because He is my security camera and He sees me anytime.

As I grow up and become an adult, He knows me well. He is my security camera who leads and guides me even if I hide by myself to do my secret things, because I am his creature.

Even if I hide by myself in the deep water, He sees me. He will judge me in His kingdom.

He is right to judge me because I am His creature, and He knows everything that I am doing in my life.

Yes, Jesus Christ, my God, is my security camera.

I thank the Holy Spirit my God in the name of Jesus Christ,
because He is my creature.

As it is written in the book of Job 33:4.

“The Spirit of God has made me.

And the breath of the Almighty gives me life”

I thank my parents IHANO MKEYO my father,
And ASENDE L’ULANGALA my mother.

I thank Literacy Kansas City for my English education, and
My teachers; Michela, Melissa, Anderson, Karl, and Jodi
Garbison,

I thank all of my classmates at LKC MISSOURI.

Thank you.

Nostalgia

by Lienny Jaramillo

Le diría a la a la niña de 10 años de hace exactamente 10 años atrás, aprovecha cada segundo de inocencia, a la hora de crecer todo cambia, disfruta con todos tus amigos, con tu familia, pues hoy en día ya no estamos rodeadas de esas personas que tanto queremos, ahora estamos en busca de nuevas oportunidades en un país diferente. Abraza mucho a abuela, la extraño desde hace 6 años que se fue. Y nunca tengas miedo de ser tú misma, eso hace tu esencia.

* * *

I would tell the ten-year-old girl from exactly ten years ago, enjoy every second of innocence. When it comes time to grow up, everything changes. Be happy all the time with your friends and family, because today we aren't surrounded by the people we love. Now we are looking for new opportunities in a different country. Give grandma lots of hugs! I miss her so much since she left six years ago. And never be afraid to be yourself; that makes your essence. We change a lot of things in our lives. We don't live with Dad and Mom anymore. I miss them, but sometimes I go visit them. Everything is fine anyway. I am living with a man who loves me and I love him. We're happy together. I'm learning English. I wish I had learned before, but I'm doing my best. Don't forget to always take the opportunity to learn everything you can, little girl.

What I Thought I Knew

by Fernanda Neri

I wouldn't consider myself a psychologist or anything like that, but I've had to learn so much on my own, create and follow my own advice. I don't know if I'm the only one asking this question. "What is something you would have liked to hear when you started a new life?"

No matter the age, the situation, or how you start your new life, no one has life figured out and no one is perfect. There are many people who have a high ego and think that they will not need help, but trust me, we all need a few simple words, to be listened to or even a hug.

This is a long little piece of advice that I would have liked to hear.

You have to take every moment calmly, with patience and with great faith that everything will improve. Every uncomfortable moment is valid and is one of the most important in every step you take. Tears are necessary, and they're completely normal. They're not for weak people. Always ask for help, remember that you will never be alone and if at any time you are, trust yourself, trust the process.

Always remember your goals, and don't let anyone stop you from doing the things you like. You will find good people but also bad people. Feel free to express yourself, do not repress your emotions because your body will respond to that.

Don't rush to get things, enjoy every little moment you have and take things slowly and calmly.

An independent life away from the family is for brave people.

You fight for everything but also get everything you want.

There are many things to learn, languages, places, your personality, more people and a whole world. Learn to control your emotions, your words, and always clear your mind when you need it.

Breakfast

by Eldouma Ibrahim

All people in the world have breakfast and most people eat and drink the same things for breakfast. They may eat different things for all the other meals in the day, but at breakfast time, most people have the same things

Tea or Coffee,

Bread and Butter, Fruit

Some people eat meat for breakfast. Sudanese people usually eat meat at breakfast time, but Sudan is a hot country. It is bad to eat meat: if you eat meat for breakfast, you eat meat two times a day and that is bad in a hot country. It is also bad to eat meat and drink tea at the same time for the tea makes the meat hard so that the stomach cannot deal with it.

The best breakfast is Tea or Coffee, Bread and Butter, and Fruit. That is the usual breakfast of most people in the world. Let us look at the breakfast table and see where these things come from.

You know how butter is made? Or from what country do you get the wheat from which the bread is made? Is the wheat grown in your own country or do you get it from some other place? If you do not eat breakfast, what do you eat instead? Some people eat other things instead of bread, but they are all of the same kind—things made of grain.

People usually eat butter with bread. What is butter? How is butter made?

Of course you know that butter is made from cream.

Cream is the fatty part of milk. If you leave milk in a wide pot for a couple hours, all the cream comes up to the top.

Butter is made from cream. If you put cream in a pot, close the pot and shake it for a long time, that will make butter. Butter

is usually made by putting cream in a machine which beats up the cream and shakes it (To beat here means to move liquid round.)
around and mixes it, as we do in preparing it for cooking.
If you beat or shake cream, it becomes butter. Why does it do this? What is the difference between cream and butter? Cream is the fat of milk.

My Story

by Lidia Rodas

This is my story. I am from El Salvador. I am thirty-five years old. I love God and my family. They are everything to me. But when I was eighteen years old, I traveled to the US in 2007 because I needed to work and help my parents and siblings who stayed in El Salvador. For me, it was very sad to say goodbye to them because I didn't know how long I would be without being able to see them. It was very difficult to leave them, but it was for a better life. We can't see each other in person, but we talk on the phone to show each other the love we have for each other as a family. Over the years, I got married and have a family, two beautiful daughters and my husband. We are a happy family but I always miss my parents and siblings, seventeen years have passed, but I have learned to live with the beautiful memories that we lived together. I feel happy because I have been able to achieve the goal of helping them with everything necessary that a person may need, and I have faith that one day we will hug each other again.

At What Point did I Become an Adult

by Gary Cifuentes

At what point did I become an adult? What to say to the ten-year-old boy I once was? First of all, always be grateful to God and life. Sometimes you don't know the sacrifice that parents make to provide what is necessary. At that age you just want to have fun playing, school and your small obligations, but you always think about growing up and being an adult. Be patient. Everything comes in its time. Enjoy life and every day, because every minute, every hour, every day that passes never returns. In reality, I think the best stage of life was being children and we didn't even know it. Time passes very quickly out of nowhere, and without realizing it you stop meeting your friends, schoolmates, so many things are left out. Perhaps many of them were not important, but in the end you miss all that. You don't know when or where the last soccer game was played together, and you start to focus and do those things as an adult, which you always longed for and in reality they don't seem so easy but they don't seem impossible either. That's when you think and say, at what moment did I become adult? Create unforgettable memories, enjoy everything you do, always respect others, and above all and most importantly, always give thanks to God.

Palestinian Traditional Mediterranean Food

by Rasmia Hijaz

Palestine, The Holy Land. It's a sacred place for three major religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. It is located in West Asia.

Palestine has many authentic foods. Fresh salads and dips, like hummus and garlic dips are fundamental components of Palestinian meals, and they often feature a colorful array of fresh vegetables. Tabbouleh and Fattoush are popular across the region and on the Palestinian table.

A lot of delicious dishes like Maftool (wheat pearls in vegetables, chickpea, and chicken stew), also Falafel, Kebab, Kibbeh, Mansaf (made of lamb cooked in a sauce of fermented dried yogurt and served with rice), Maklobah (upside-down dish made with fried vegetables, meat, rice and eggplant), Musakhan, a large Taboon bread (made in a portable clay oven) topped with sumac (Shrub - *Rhus Coriaria*), onions, and olive oil.

Most Palestinian food is mild, the coastal region generally relies more heavily on fish and vegetables than the interior where Lamb is the main protein.

As for desserts, Knafeh from Nabblus; a city surrounded by mountains at the midpoints, between Nazareth and Jerusalem, Knafeh is a cheese topped with special dough, drizzled with simple syrup, and pistachios. Mtabbak is a traditional dessert native to Hebron; it is a crispy dough stuffed with crushed walnuts. Kaak bil tamr are date-filled cookies. Mabrousheh is jam bars similar to shortbread; it's very popular (and one of my childhood favorites at my grandmother's house) and Farayek too (a dough with sesame seeds and olive oil).

Olives and olive trees held great significance in Mediterranean Palestinian Culture and History for thousands of years and have played a crucial role in shaping the economy, cuisine, symbolism, and traditions of the region.

Olive and olive oil are essential ingredients in Palestinian cuisine. They are used in dishes including salads, sauces, and marinades.

The distinct flavors and health benefits of olive oil have made it a prized element of Mediterranean Cooking.

Family

by Janett Del Angel

This is a story about my family.

My Mom, Dad, Sister and Brother. They always occupy a place in my life.

My parents are the ones who taught me what I know now.

My sister is always with me in my sad and happy day. Her hug is very important to me.

My brother is not in my life, but he left many memories that remain in my mind.

He was my friend. The kids and adults have beautiful memories, someday we will be together.

I will always have beautiful memories of this part of my family, because now I have another story, of my new family. My husband and my three children. We try to always be together on our adventures!

Football

by Roberson Petit Frere

There are many different sports but football is the best. It's more fun than baseball and better than all the others.

Football is my favorite sport, what else can I say? It can be a lot of fun if you know how to play.

I really want our team to do better and I love it when we win. But when the game is over, I always want to play again.

We have a very good coach to teach us how to play so that we can all become great football players one day.

Even if we can't win every game, the coach wants us to have fun. It doesn't matter if we win or lose, our team is always number one.

My Favorite Holiday

by Gema Aguilar

I like Christmas because it is a time to be together with the family.

In Mexico, the nine days before Christmas from December 16th to December 24th we make posadas, as it is a Catholic celebration.

What is the posada? It is time to pray, share with friends and family, and sing the posada song as we enter the house. We take turns hosting the celebration.

In Mexico, we decorate with colored lights, put out the Nativity sets for Christmas, make piñatas, and decorate the Christmas tree.

The popular foods for Christmas are pozole and tamales. The drink is hot fruit punch.

Family Visit

by Cidra Naif

I have been married for eight years. It was the most difficult period when I spent three years without seeing my family. All this sadness ended when, one day, my husband told me he had made a reservation for us, after one week, to travel to Syria. I started preparing everything.

I put in my bags all the clothes I wanted my family to see and my kids' clothes.

I felt happy, nervous, and cried sometimes because I couldn't believe I would see my family after all that time.

I remember the day was August 13, 2020.

Our evening started in Chicago. After that we went to Jordan, then on to Lebanon, and there we took a taxi to Syria. After twenty hours, I met my family. I was happy and my family was so happy.

They met my daughter Jana for the first time. She was three years old.

After that we ate the best food. My mom brought Sfeha to dinner (Sfeha is Syrian food, bread with meat and some tomato) and on the side we ate yogurt. And she cooked my favorite food, rice and chicken.

We ate dessert, Kunafa and Harissa.

I spent a good month with my family, and it was the hardest time when I came back to the US.

I was so sad, and I hope to see them again.

A Story

by Louis Pierre

I'm the last child in my family, born on November 3, 1998 in Haiti. My name is LOUIS, a positive and creative man, who believes in success. Since I've been here, I give myself a mission to follow the success even if there's no way before. That's why I start my English class, to help me improve myself, cause I realize you won't have someone to help you all the time, and you must help yourself first. So right now, I do a lot of things by myself without asking for help. Speaking English is one of the most important keys to success in the USA.

As I said, I'm positive and creative. Let me tell you some of my stories that will inspire you as a migrant. When I start to see how people are in my hood, I've started to create my own way, like follow influencers on social media (people who can tell me what others don't and are afraid to ask), learn new skills on the internet. Because of these things, I get another job that people who were here before never knew how to do and want to follow me (being Amazon Flex delivery). I grow up my level in the country. There's so many things I would like to share, but words are hard to find. But I will give you some advice from my experience. Trust in yourself, when they say it's not enough, create your own way to learn, follow positive people who were here before you, stay humble, and trust in the process.

Louis, the man who comes to win.

In the Spring

by Vanessa Faria de Sousa

In the spring... I can see the flowers blooming
I can smell the rain falling
I can feel the sun shining
I can hear the birds singing
I can touch the water warming
I can walk on the grass restoring
I can be grateful for memories coming
I can dream of a new beginning
I can know that God is keeping me

Thai Food

by Ladda Abt

Thai food “papaya salad,” somtam in Thai
My name is Ladda Abt, I came from
Thailand. The weather in my country is hot.
Here I will tell you about a delicious food
and popular name, somtam papaya salad.
I eat it often, it tastes delicious and the Method is easy to
make.

Excellent:

1 Green papaya chop and soak in ice water for 10-15
minutes

- 2 chili
- 2 garlic cloves
- 3 fresh lime juice
- 4 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 5 1 tablespoon sugar
- 6 2-3 long green beans add 1 carrot or up to you
- 7 1 tablespoon roasted peanuts
- 8 1 tomato cut up

Whenever I have a party, I like to make papaya salad. It's
my favorite. Thailand has registered it as a national food.
It was received as a royal composition by Phra Thep Suda,
daughter of the second queen.

My Vacation was a Dream

by Karen Cardenas

My name is Karen Cardenas. I'm from Mexico. I have been living in this country for two years. My family is small. I have a husband and two daughters, and I want to tell you why this vacation was special.

My vacation was a dream come true for my family because we went to Disneyland in Anaheim, California. When I was a child, I always imagined being there and I never thought I could achieve it. Now that I am a mother, seeing my daughters happy to meet their favorite characters and see the princesses in the castle was very exciting. It's a magic place.

The next day we went to Universal Studios Hollywood. In the afternoon, we visited Santa Monica Beach; we walked in the sand and we saw a beautiful sunset.

This was one of my best family vacations and I hope to see more beautiful places around the world.

Marcelino the Mouse

by Paula Leynez

Today I want to narrate the magnificent history of Marcelino, the smallest mouse that came into this world. All of his family thought he would not survive too long because he was so small and fragile. He also had BIG ears, not like the other mice.

As he grew up, he was winning many obstacles because he didn't like acting like a normal mouse. Marcelino did not like to steal food, he was not scared of cats, and he was afraid of the dark. When his parents found out that he was different from the other mice, they were disappointed. They decided to send him to the dungeons of the castle where they lived.

He met Leopoldina, an old rat. He was too old but too wise. When Marcelino was afraid of the dark, she was by him waiting until he fell asleep. After many years, Leopoldina was too wise, and she could see that Marcelino had power, and she was determined to find out what it was.

The years passed, and Leopoldina taught Marcelino everything. She even showed him the secret passages that the castle had.

And that's how Marcelino learned to move around the castle without anyone seeing him. Then, one morning his life changed forever; he heard how some men were plotting to kill the king. Marcelino did not know how to inform the king, so he looked for a way to tell the king.

One night while the king was sleeping, Marcelino would approach the king when he was fast asleep and whisper in his ear what he heard that morning.

So, when the king woke up he would think that he dreamed it, and every night Marcelino would whisper to the king again, until the king began to suspect that it was not a simple dream, and he decided to pretend to be asleep to verify that what he was dreaming night after night was

not a dream.

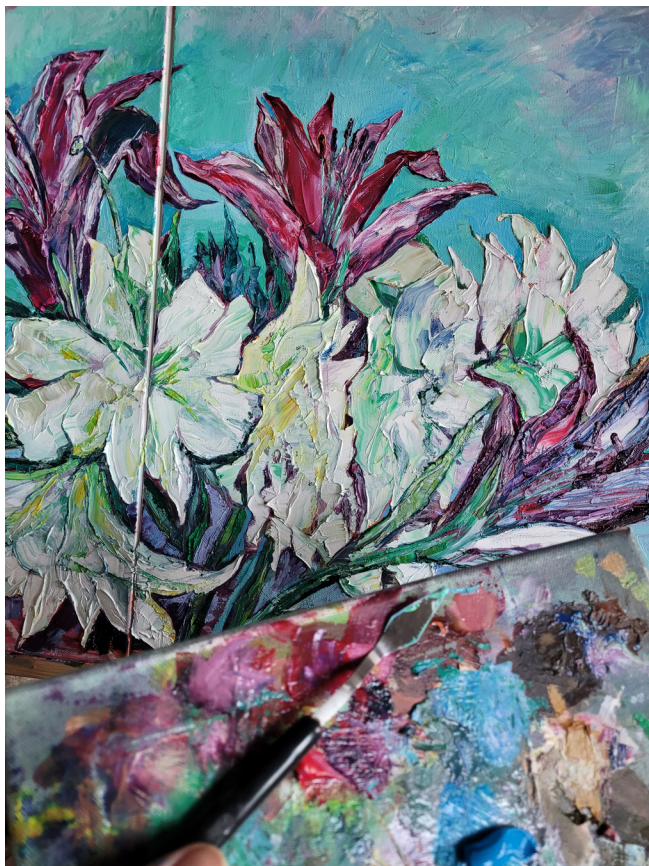
And that's how he saw how Marcelino entered and whispered to him. The king awarded Marcelino for his great bravery and appointed him as his right-hand man. Wherever the king wanted Marcelino to go, he went.

THE END!

Five Artworks by Tetiana Siedina

I received an art education in Ukraine. Since 2019, I have been living in Kansas City. I continue my creative activity here. Here I took part in different city art shows and gallery exhibitions. I am interested in people and their pets. Among my works, there are many portraits and caricatures, which I do quickly and cheerfully right at the Art events.

But flowers have taken a special place in my art. It's beautiful; it's exciting. It's about life. They decorate all our events, both joyful and sad. So, I created a series of flowers called "Sunflowers" in the first weeks of the full-scale war in Ukraine. All of them are painted in the patriotic colors of the Ukrainian flag—yellow and blue. I love life. I want it to be painted with all the bright colors. I want there to be peace on Earth.



“Winter Fantasy” by Tetiana Siedina, 38” x 20,”
oil, 2 canvases. 2022.



“Morning Coffee” by Tetiana Siedina, 3.5” x 4.8”,
color markers, paper. 2021.



“Sunflower” by Tetiana Siedina, 16” x 20,” acrylic,
canvas. 2022.



“Sunflower” by Tetiana Siedina, 16” x 20,” acrylic, canvas. 2022.



"Sunflower" by Tetiana Siedina, 24" x 24," acrylic, canvas. 2022.

My Grandmother

by Karina Centeno

My grandmother, she's from Portugal. Her name is Julia, she's 95 years old. When she was young, she married in Portugal with my grandfather called Juan. They had seven children, six boys and one girl, my mom. Many years ago, Venezuela was a good option to emigrate, and they left their country looking for new opportunities.

In her country, it's a tradition to make wine with our feet. After draining the juice into a pot, it must be left to stand for one month for the wine to ferment. She has grapes at home; the people always tell her the grapes look so delicious, and she says "Yes!! My grapes are from Portugal." When she left her country, she brought grapes.

She likes to play cards with me and dominos with my parents. When I lived in Venezuela, I got three tattoos for her: her name in Japanese, sunflowers (she loves sunflowers that's why I got it tattooed), and, on my leg, I have another one that says *Seja forte e corajosa*. That means be strong and courageous.

I'm so grateful to her for everything she taught me, I haven't seen her for one year and seven months, and I miss her like the first day. I love you, Grandma, always with me and I am always with you. With all love...

To Live

by Claudia Martinez

How it feels to live without you?
How I can imagine to live without you?
The time passes but your word never passes
 "Oh my Lord!"

My life is nothing without you
My happiness does not exist if I don't have you
There is no purpose to live if I don't have you
 "Oh my Lord!"

How good you have been, you are
and you will be to me.

Just because you are...

Son

by Maricruz Benitez

Today I am going to tell you the life of my immigrant son. At school, he was a child who didn't know how to speak or write in English. He was ten years old when we arrived. It was very difficult for him, but with the help of his teachers he was able to get ahead. The teachers told him that he could play sports (football, soccer, wrestling, track, and basketball) after school, and he liked it a lot. He plays every sport of every season. He even went into sewing. Now he is a professional accountant. I thank all the teachers and coaches who helped him along his path.

Whisky

by Camison Jean

When I was six years old I had a dog
And his name was Whisky.
We couldn't live separately, cause we grew up together,
We used to play soccer, Whisky was my
Best friend cause he was always there for me
And I was always there for him.
One day I woke up and Whisky was dead.
It was the worst day in my life, until now
I can see his face in my mind.
Hope one day I can get another Whisky.

Energy

by Maruoane Bellamlik

My favorite topic is energy. Energy gives me good emotions in my life. I work hard, keep positive thoughts, and spend time with my family and my friends in school. When I exercise in the gym, I feel better physically and mentally all the time. When I eat my mother's good food that is healthy it also makes great energy and good power in my life.

Childhood

by Mouna El Farasy

Childhood is amazing
Childhood is fun
Childhood is memories
Childhood is love
Childhood is happiness
Childhood is laugh
Childhood is holidays
Childhood is warm
Childhood is friendship
Childhood is charm
Childhood is vacations
Childhood is nice
Childhood is together
 Please have fun

Myself

by Abdullah Hamed

I would like to tell you a short story about myself, I hope you will like it.

Firstly, my name is Abdullah and I'm twenty-seven years old. I was born in Jordan in January. I remember my mom told me when I opened my eyes for the first time it was raining. I'm the fifth kid in my family, I have four sisters and two brothers. My childhood was funny and nice. I grew up in a good family, and we used to love and help each other. I had a lot of cousins, and we were naughty children. My memories with them are amazing, we did everything, we played everything, we liked playing football and swimming and making some troubles.

At the same time, I was a good student in school. My degrees were good. I finished high school in 2015, and after that I went to college, and I decided to study engineering. My college period was good, I met my best friends in college. I have four friends, and each of them has a different personality. But unfortunately I saw one of them one year ago. After college, everyone goes different ways to complete their life. I graduated from college in 2020, Covid's year. After that, I got a job, and it was a hard job, because it's hard when you get a job in your field and you don't have any experience.

After two years of working, I met my wife and we liked each other and decided to get married. After that, we moved to America and I got my first job. I'm still working the same job in a restaurant. I like this job because I learn English from it. We had a baby last August. We called her Hayam; this name means love, and I think that I have written the most important things in my life.

Thank you.

I Can't Wait for Spring to Come

by Earm Nou

I'm tired of weather, tired of snow, tired of cold, and I'm tired of weather jackets! Just think! In a few more weeks it won't be winter anymore. It'll be spring. It won't be cold. I'll be warm. It won't snow anymore. The weather won't be cold. My kids won't have to stay indoors. They'll go outside to ride bicycles and play basketball again. My husband and I will spend more time outdoors. He'll cut the tree branches and cut the grass. I'll work in the yard too. I'll buy new flowers and plant them in the garden. We won't sit in the living room and watch TV.

We'll go for walks in the park. We'll have a picnic on Saturday afternoons.

I can't wait for spring to come! Hurry spring!

Education

by Ghania Nour

Education is one of the most important priorities in life. Knowledge helps you achieve a lot of goals, especially in the world we know today. Literacy KC has provided me opportunities and helped me to improve my English. This program is free and helps every immigrant who wants to learn and achieve a better future. The education system opens up doors of employment and business opportunities for many people. It gives you more responsibility and knowledge. We must learn and develop for a better life.

Two Poems

by Mawulolo Zissou

A Good Friend

I'm from a music home.
I'm from a peace home.
I'm from gladness and peace country.
I assist the broken's homes.
I calm broken hearts.
Oh, what sweet music!
Oh, what miracle music!
I'm the peace!
I'm the joy.
I give hope.
I hope
I'm giving hope!
I destroy the suffering of hearts.
I give a smile to a dark face.
I turn on the lights—
music, music, music!
The good well of my experience.

At the Village

Long before we ignored everything around us,
Let's focus on the corners once ignored by the
civilization.
An isolated domain; constructions in jumble mode
makes our village uniform.
The inhabitants known as villagers, free like the birds of
Pair, embodies a well-hierarchical organization.
Hospitality is the most important law of our village. THE
cooperatives, mutual aid are among other qualities
inhabitants. The work is well-organized in a series of
repetitive rotations.

One thing is certain: wisdom and culture being
our values, it is in the order of things that this be
passed down from generation to generation. To make this
clear of the full moon, old men organize meetings around
such a soft fire, and together they tell stories
adages, African proverb and stories of events
passed with moral lessons to back it up.
We are proud to be from a village and to have the privilege
of taking part in these moments too
glorious and magnificent where joy is the absolute master...

A dead cat
On the roads filled with invisibility
Pale, bring out a necessary phenomenon.
Sad and serene, everyone withdraws their visibility
Lungs at ease, teeth clenched
This is the destiny of all those who breathe in and out
Abandoned without wisdom, loved ones have disappeared.
Calm! Why on the road? Shelter of the turns.
The agony. A blood-stained cat in the street.
Without support, eyes open green the sky
The oriels in the direction of regret
The hairs mix, disturbed such in carnal
Sad and unhappy, rest in peace
The living will only think of progress
An agonized cat, its tail ignored on the right side of peace.

The Lake

by Antonio Romero

We have the most beautiful things in the world: rivers, the beautiful fields of pine trees, and wildflowers that grow on the side of these beautiful lakes. The sun and moon reflect upon the mirror surface as if they were shining into heaven. The beauties of the United States reflect on Mother Nature at her best. She speaks to us and invites us to enjoy the lake while the lake enjoys us. As we laugh, the lake feels like a part of us as we make memories that will last forever.

This is the lake.

A Poem

by Emanuel Sousa

My name is Emanuel Sousa.

My name was agreed between my father and my mom.

History of my name remembers the history of Jesus.

My name meaning god with us.

My name is heaven.

My name is nice because it is about communion of Jesus.

My name is like music to call Jesus.

My name is showing to everybody Jesus together us.

A Poem

by Yasmim

My name is Yasmim
My father gave me that name because
He thought the name was beautiful
In my country, the people call me “Mim,”
It’s like “me” and they always joked about it,
But I like this, it’s a healthy joke.
My name is like a flower,
The flower that exudes an excellent perfume
My name is Yasmim, the one that shares
Its essence wherever it goes
My name is Yasmim like birds chirping or a water fall
My name is communion, it is the love I have for my family

This is My Story About My Life

by Abukar Ali

My name is Abukar Ali.

I remember when I was young, my father always beat me. But when I was eighteen years old, I left his home. I remember one day he arrested my hand with my legs so that it was a bad day. Also, I remember when I was over eighteen years old, my father said to me, "Don't come to my home because you are not my son." But I didn't know at that time where I should go. That's why I don't like to remember my childhood.

After five months, I left all my parents. I met my first wife. She said to me, "Come stay with me." She gave me love, joy, compassion, and she also gave me a small house and a small bed. I found a little bit of work, then I spent my wedding and my honeymoon, but that time I didn't have enough money.

After two months, she was pregnant with my first son, Said, and after nine months my wife Aisha gave birth to her first child. She gave me everything, and I lived happily, and I had more children.

Now, I'm the father of five children. I don't have any problems now.

But when I remember those days, I'm sad.

But I pray to God for everything that I lack. Also I hope to find everything.

GOODBYE AND GOODLUCK

Guatemala, Hearth of the Mayan World

by Danni Noe Galicia

I am introducing myself. My name is Danni Noe Galicia. I am thirty-four years old, from the Petén State of the beautiful Guatemala, country of the eternal spring. I grew up with my grandparents, with a lot of love. When I was a child, I always had goals and dreams, like to travel to visit many countries of this world, like Paris, Switzerland, and Spain. So, my mother worked hard to give me education, food, and everything that she could.

My dream started when I went to school, and I studied tourism. The three years that I studied were very exciting because I traveled to different states, knowing my culture, food, Mayan pyramids, Biotopo Mario Dary Rivera Nature Reserve, and lakes. For me, I describe it only in one word: HAPPINESS. I want to show to the world that in Guatemala we have nice people, beautiful places, Archaeological Mayan Sites, like Tikal, Yaxhá, beautiful lakes like Panajachel, Rio Dulce and the capital city of my state, Flores Island. Also, we have the Antigua Guatemala; it is one of the Old Capital Cities.

I studied English and the Italian language. I enjoyed my high school. This world needs to know that Guatemala is a beautiful country, and you have to visit it. It is named *hearth of the Mayan world* because it was the Mayan civilization, and we are very proud. I love to talk about my country. I invite people to travel and explore Guatemala.

I finished my high school in the year 2010. Then, I went to Guatemala City for work for a couple years. I worked seven years in Pizza Hut, then I decided to return to my city and I worked in Flores Island. I met a couple of people from Belgium, and they were very nice with me. I was their tourist guide. They invited me to Belgium. I took the opportunity, and I traveled for the first time by plane, and my first time traveling out of my country. I visited Paris, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Italy, and Belgium, and after eight

beautiful months, I came back to Guatemala.

I worked a lot to get the opportunity to work in the USA. In the year 2022, finally I got the opportunity to travel to the USA. I am here working very hard and making my dreams real. I am happy with my life. God is always with me and with the blessings of my family. Everything is possible when you work on your dreams and goals.

Life is beautiful, and every day is a big opportunity to work on our dreams and make everything possible.

iLive and love your life!

Something About Me

by Danny Acosta

My name is Danny Acosta, and I am twenty-four years old.

I'm from Honduras, but now I live in the United States. I'm studying English, and I hope to be able to speak English very well soon and to be able to communicate very well without problems here.

I like to play music!

Thanks to my family, when I was an eleven-year-old boy, I started studying music and instruments, such as guitar, bass, piano (keyboard), and drums. I like feeling the music, and I like to listen to the music.

I hope to one day become a professional musician.

I'm a Christian. I've been going to church since I was a baby. Thanks to my family and my parents, I was always taught everything about God, and of course, since I am a musician I participate in a music group. I remember that my dad forced me to learn to play an instrument in order to participate in the church music group. To this day, I give thanks to him and my mom because I discovered that this is what I like best.

Memories

by Elia Perez

My name is Elia, I am thirty-three years old.

I was born and grew up in Mexico.

I have been living in the USA for eleven years.

I really like everything about the USA, but I miss my country a lot, because everything is beautiful. There are many mountains and waterfalls with a warm climate. There is also a great variety of fruits, oranges, tangerines, bananas, all kinds of fruit, and everything is natural.

I have the best memories there: Christmas with all my brothers together having dinner and playing was the best. There were never any gifts, but just being with them was the best. I love family moments.

I also miss the food my mom cooked: enchiladas, quesadillas and molé were my favorites. They were the most delicious.

For these reasons I miss my country, and I only hope to go again soon to be able to enjoy all that.

Laika

by Glenda Flores

Hello, my name is Glenda Flores. I am from Honduras. I want to talk to you about Laika. Laika was the name of our German Shepherd. She was born in December 2013 and came into our lives on February 14, 2014. She was two months old and was the birthday gift for my two little children: Yarenys, who was fourteen years old, and Joshua, who was twelve years old at the time.

I remember the happy faces of my children when they saw her for the first time. We decided as a family that her name would be Laika Valentina Acosta. We named her Laika after a famous dog who was an astronaut, and that's why we liked the name. We chose Valentina because she came to our house in February, the month of love and she was our great love. She became another member of our family.

Laika was a delicate dog, as she suffered from skin allergies, and her food had to be specially ordered; she could not eat protein. We had to take her to the veterinarian every two months at least in her first years. When she was three years old, her doctor said there was nothing more that could be done for her, but Greisy, my eldest daughter, did not accept that diagnosis and decided to seek another opinion. That is when we found a place where the vet gave us hope.

Between treatments, a lot of medication and love, we experienced many things. We formed many memories with Laika, and time passed. For years, she was our only pet, but we noticed that she needed someone to play with. So we brought her a pitbull (Luna) for company, then we brought in a husky (Leo), and lastly our husky puppy (Loba).

She was happy, but Laika began to show weakness in her hind legs that progressed very quickly. The vet told us that there was no medication for her disease (Degenerative Myelopathy), which accelerated in four months. Laika

began crawling around rather than walking, and it was sad to see her. After six months, her condition had worsened significantly. Laika could no longer walk. The disease had taken over half of her body.

The vet spoke with us, and it was time to decide. It was difficult, but it was for the best. We had to put our dog daughter to sleep in January of this year, at ten years old. She left an immense void in our lives. We will always remember her. We will love you, Laika, forever.



Mother Earth

by Juan Saldana

My name is Juan Saldana. Mother Earth is a place where we live and a place where life gives us the opportunity to live. Thank god on April 8, 2024 an astronomical eclipse was presented that brings with it the changes on the earth, like storms, tornadoes. Just like when we come to this country without knowing, above all, the English language. It is difficult for us to come, loaded with illusions. And as time passes, we fall into this world. There are all bad people and good people to mention. Some people want to see you succeed, like the teacher. The family says, thank you for always being there giving your best.

I Love Singing

by Helan Villanueva

Today marks one year and four months... I don't know what to call it anymore, enough evidence that it is just a trip from which you can't always come back, and here we are, ready to bring new adventures to our lives.

My name is Helan Villanueva, and I am another immigrant in search of the American dream. The truth is I don't know what the American dream could be for me. I had everything in my land, Peru. I always say that I am here to give a better future to my children, and I am trying to achieve it through effort and work.

Every morning I get up and motivate myself, because I have a couple of children who I have to help become professionals like their parents. It is the new goal.

I forgot about my personal goals; prioritize my children's goals, and in the course of the adventure I discovered new ways to get away from the daily work routine a little.

I'll tell you my little secret.

I remember last month I saw a friend on a karaoke app.

It had a beautiful sound system. When he sang I heard a melodic sound. I was excited, because I loved that sound, and from that moment on I heard that beautiful sound all the time in my mind.

Last week, I bought this microphone and the entire sound system. When I found the right setup on Amazon, I was excited. When I saw the colors of the microphone, I was convinced that I was in the right place at the right time.

I was excited because it said it had a 30% discount and something in me told me, this is the solution I was looking for.

A few days later, when the box arrived at my door, I hoped no one saw me opening it, because a tear escaped. It was a very tender moment, but also full of resentment. I really wouldn't know how to explain this contradiction.

It's like to enjoy these happy moments, I have had to pay the price of leaving my country and arriving in the United States.

Now when I turn on the sound system, I hear my sweet and realistic voice in high fidelity headphones. I feel very happy because for a long time I dreamed of this moment.

Every night, after hard work, I feel like a famous singer. I mix among Argentinian, Colombian, Chilean, and friends from all over the world, and I leave my small room in my imagination... I feel like a child with a new toy; I'm happy.

I think that for many, choosing a path can be a conscious thing. But going through it, for everyone, is always a matter of chance.

At some stage in your life you realize that life wants to tell you something. And then you see it: beautiful, free, and happy.

We are Humans

by Iraiz Nava Mora

To live is to remember and to remember is to live.

I remember when I was a kid I always said when I grow up I'm going to do everything I want. Nobody can stop me. All the time I prayed for a good way, but I didn't always get the right way. I lost myself for a short time, but God blessed me all the time.

Be always happy.

Life is a beautiful present from God.

You can do everything in this life.

You can't keep anything when you pass away;

Enjoy your life every single day.

Life is too short to get mad all the time; smile.

Don't feel anger in your heart.

Life is hard, but you can do everything.

Change your mind and get good thoughts.

Believe in yourself, and always be good too.

These words come from the bottom of my heart.

Historia de Exito

by Janeth Boose

Hola, mi nombre es Janeth Boose. Soy de nacionalidad Hondureña. Recuerdo cuando llegué a este país hace algunos años como a toda persona se le hace difícil todo por que? No sabemos el idioma, no podemos manejar un carro y aunque podamos manejar no tenemos un carro y es triste la situación sin dinero sin trabajo y se nos hace muy difícil todo. Pero en este caminar Dios no nos deja de su mano y pone personas buenas en el camino. Recuerdo que una persona me ayudó para poder empezar a trabajar después de 6 largos meses orando a Dios para que me ayudara a salir de esa triste situación. Esa misma persona me prestó un carro y un día de tantos supe de una escuela que daba clases gratis y me alegré tanto que empecé a buscar la dirección en ese tiempo estaban en la Independence Ave. y la calle Campbell. Así empecé a asistir clases de inglés no ha sido fácil pero lo poco que he aprendido es por el esfuerzo de cada maestro que se esmera por enseñarnos. Hasta el día de hoy sigo aprendiendo más cada día y el nombre de la escuela es Literacy KC. Le doy gracias a Dios por poner esos ángeles en nuestro camino y doy gracias a Dios por cada maestro que he conocido. Cada maestro es muy bueno, amable y amigable. Y también he conocido muchas personas de distintas nacionalidades y culturas. Esta es mi poca historia que les puedo contar. Dios les bendiga. GRACIAS.

My Feelings

by Javier Bustillos

Ahora que ya no están no me preocupo tanto porque lo tienen todo en un lugar mejor. Ya no sufren, no tienen de qué preocuparse. Están en un lugar mejor. Por eso estoy bien.

Ellos vivieron su vida, pero uno no miró la luz. Vivió en su madre 8 meses su corazón latió pero Dios así lo quiso.

Hoy vivo de los recuerdos, pensando
Un día los volveré a mirar
Yo sé que ellos me miran
Siempre los recordare
Están en mí todo el tiempo

Dios es grande
Solo él sabe lo que hace
Y respetar su decisión
Y tener temor a Dios
No lo veo, pero sí creo en él
Un día será llamado
Entonces empezaré a vivir
Porque hay que morir para
Vivir, gracias Dios

Memories

by Katherine Montenegro

A delicious coffee in the morning, prepared with beautiful hands. While I listen to the barking of the dogs, and the dry leaves being blown by the wind, the sound of the spring, the sound of happiness of the eternal spring.

I admit that I feel sad having the warmth of home far away, but I am happy for all those memories kept in the hollow of my heart.

Hoping to drink that delicious coffee again, and those long talks. Thank God and life that I can call you Grandmother.

Remember Me

by Miguel Gonzalez Alvarez

I am Miguel Gonzalez Alvarez. I am from Manzanillo, Granma, Cuba. I am the first person in my family to come to the United States of America. I arrived here on January 1, 2022. I crossed four countries, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico in twelve days. It was difficult. I had to walk under the rain, no food, no water, and too many problems, but I'm here.

The life of the immigrant people is very difficult, because many people from South America do not speak English, and they prefer to work and not study here. All the people need money, but now money is not the solution. I prefer to study for two, three, or five years. I work, but it is not my priority because if you like to stay in this country, speaking English is very important. Sometimes I don't feel good because I don't have loved ones by my side, but I must move forward.

I wrote these lines the day after the most beautiful solar eclipse. Today is Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 8:20 pm. The next full eclipse will pass in 300 years. Maybe when the next thing happens you will read these lines, "DON'T LET ME DOWN," and remember an immigrant wrote this for you. Don't disappoint me. You can do it.

Two Poems

by Nelson Garcia

This is Just a Love Poem

And here you have me thinking about you all the time,
Imagining you all hours; making plans with you;
Needing you to be happy
And here you have me loving you and dreaming of you
Without explanation;
And without measures hoping that one day
You will get lost in my arms and then
You will never find the way out.

Poem to El Salvador

My place hears the sound of trees, a song of mountains,
A dance of rivers, my place is the best
Of three doors to freedom the sun delivers.
I live nowhere; I sleep in gardens, I have just little
But carry no burdens
There I still live; I still belong; sometimes
I feel the urge to go whenever possible; in dreams at least
To stay with mom and name the feast
My place is dancing perhaps in dreams but still it's beauty
That I can feel. I feel rich there and sense I'm free

This is My History, Thoughts, and Feelings, Details About My Wife

by Ronny Orellana

My sensory details are about my wife; she is Alice. When I remember her, I have a sensation that I see her face, and she is happy and smiling. I have in my imagination that I see her walking in our house. I can see her long black hair and how she looks. Always, in my imagination or sensation, I can hear that she is cooking, and I smell the food in the kitchen. I can feel in my imagination that she is listening to her music and her favorite music is love songs or bachata. And when I come back home from work, I always think that she is waiting for me. And when I arrive home, she receives me with a hug, and we sit down in the dining room to eat. Then we watch a movie and we rest because the next day we get up early.

To end this little story, it could be determined how the feeling we have towards an important person in our lives, where we think, imagine, feel, see, and touch, is realized through the sensations transmitted by the senses of the human body, and that the most important thing is that that person is in your heart and your entire being.

Two Essays

by Basilia Hernandez

Myself and Sons!

Since I was a child I have believed in improvement through study.

Always I tell this to my three sons. Is it very important to know what you want in your life? What do you like? What do you prefer? What do you want in your life? So, I am talking with them about this. Pavel said, "Mom, I want to be a mechanic." Bryant said, "I prefer to have a business." And Harryson studies graphic design in college.

Dream: Learning English

My dream is to speak English very well. This is my principal goal. I go to study English by watching TV with my sons and practicing conversation. Sometimes I write letters and poetry in English. I read a book or bible in English. I like to listen to music and podcasts in English. I speak with my coworkers.

I dream of communicating with people and maintaining relationships with my friends, at work, at the church, at the store. Everywhere, all places.

My Room
by Betty Jean

It's always a pleasure for me, when I come back home.

It is the most perfect place for me.

Because finally, I will be able to return to my bedroom.

Inside my room I feel safe.

This is a quiet place for me.

Where a great idea comes to my head.

Beautiful thoughts rise in my mind.

My Visit

by Cristina Jurado

My name is Cristina Jurado. I have four children, two boys and two girls. I was born in La Paz, Bolivia.

I came to the US in 2000 to visit my family who moved here. My dad used to take me and my younger siblings to New York, Miami, and other states to come visit. My dad was the one who controlled the airplanes in Bolivia, so it was easy for us to get visas and come to the US.

I decided to come visit when I was 50, but time went by and I found a job as a babysitter. I did that for 10 years. I moved from Kansas City, Kansas to Kansas City, Missouri in 2012.

Now I stay at home, and I enjoy knitting and crafts. Learning English interests me and now I'm in English school and very thankful.

My Country is Puerto Rico

by Darianne Soto Estremera

I was born in Puerto Rico, but I'm from Ponce. At the moment, I have been in Lee's Summit for two years.

I'm going to talk about my country Puerto Rico, a beautiful island called Isla de Encanto.

Puerto Rico is a hot place. You can do many things; you can go to the shops, plaza, beach, cinema, park, hotel, place to eat ice cream, restaurants, historic places, rivers, airports, mountains, and sunflower gardens.

I'm going to talk about my country Puerto Rico. Here are three magical memories. One is when my grandmother was alive. My sisters and my cousins and I went swimming and talked, played games and took photos. It was in the summer. Afterwards, we went to grandma's home and ate Sancocho. It has chicken and vegetables in rico broth. We ate it with tostones, drank a soft drink called Malta, coconut and pistachio ice cream dessert.

The second, my family at Christmas. We went to plaza del caribe. It is a place that sells clothes and food, and toys, and I went to take a photo with Santa Claus and the three wise men. Then, we waited for the photos to do so. My family went to see the Christmas decorations and see the store. *Let's take a photo.* Then we ate at the same place. It's called Meson Venta. We had sandwiches, salads, breakfast, hot cereal, postres y snacks, coffee and tea, and hot chocolate.

Afterwards, we went to the town of Ponce, and went to get ice cream. It's called King's Ice Cream. They are my favorite in the whole world. My favorite is peanuts. They have a lot of flavors.

The third time, I was driving. I was going to grandma's house to walk, talk, take photos, and listen to music.

Finally, I hope you like knowing about Puerto Rico and visiting Puerto Rico.

My Story

by Elvia Bougher

Elvia Hernandez Guzman

I am from Mexico City.

I am 64 years old. I am very lucky. God has blessed me in this country.

Because my life matters a lot, no matter how the year 2000 arrives until today.

2024, God allowed me with three children.

In this country, I like the culture and its states. One thing that I like is the seasons. I like that it snows, it rains, and the heat, because you can walk on the street without worry.

How is Elvia Bougher now? Well, “Bougher” because I am married to my wonderful husband, Mr. Bougher. I also thank God for everything.

For love and openness. I am an active, working, beloved woman. I like to help people. Everything that is within my means, I can share. I like the flowers, the sea, the dogs, and the birds. I like to talk and laugh, and to eat food of all kinds. I am a Christian, dedicated to serving God; I have served the temple, cleaned bathrooms there for six years, and made food in the kitchen for three years. Now I am an intercessor praying for all those who are in need. This is my current life.

PSALM-23-1

JEHOVAH IS MY SHEPHERD, I WILL LACK NOTHING.

God Love Us

by Fanny Vasquez

The Lioness Ana looked at the sky,
Thanking God for being her desire.
“Jesus is my guide,” she said lovingly,
And she always follows him fervently.

God loves us, it is true and true and pure,
In his embrace we feel safe.
To all animals large and small,
He takes care of us and protects us from heaven.

My Childhood Dream

by Floralba Diaz

My name is Floralba Diaz. My life is full of adventures. I grew up in a town named San Cristobal Guerrero. There lived my parents, brothers. and sisters. I remember one day I told my parents I wanted to go to school to learn to read and write. With a lot of sacrifice, they sent me to school.

It was a big sacrifice for me. I would wake up Monday to Friday at five in the morning to go to school. I only went to elementary school, but I was happy.

My dream was to study in middle school, high school, and college, and also to have a good education, but it was not possible because we are a big family and a small town. To stay alive, we worked in the field and planted corn, beans, peppers, and rice to eat with my family.

Dreams

by Juan Carlos Herrera Martinez

All people have dreams; some are harder to complete. The question is, what do they do to complete the dream? Some think that the road is easy, without thinking about what is left besides hobbies and free time. You have to make space for all the necessary things to complete the dream of your life. Have concentration all the time to do faster possibilities. Remember, have discipline all the time to complete your objectives in addition to having constancy. Each little thing makes the difference, that is, a step nearer to achieving your dream. Remember that there is no dream too big or fanciful. It is important to always do it without fear of failing in the process; this is why you must be proud up until the final effort. **The learning of failures is the most important.**

My Childhood Story

by Marce Ramirez Solano

My name is Marcelina. I am the eighth of ten children. I remember when I was five years old, I was playing with my dad's pillow as if it were my doll. That year my little sister was born, and I didn't know if I was going to have a sister. I knew when I saw her. I was very happy. I asked my mom many questions, "Where did you bring her from? How was she born?" My mom thought that I was too young to know, so she told me that babies are born from the dirt. And this scared me! I was looking at the dirt to see if another baby was born. I was afraid that a baby would be born, and there would be no one there to take care of it. But this feeling passed quickly. I was happy for my new sister.

After that, I stopped playing with my dad's pillow. My sister became my real doll. I couldn't carry her in my arms properly, but I did what I could. I remember that I liked to sing songs to her to make her fall asleep. That was a very nice time to me. I was excited.

I also remember that I made my own toys. I loved to make my castles from corn cobs; this was so much fun for me. I liked to play by myself. I made my cars with pieces of corn cobs for the tires and little chunks of tree. I enjoyed this time so much. I made my little dishes and a tea cup with clay. I liked this a lot; when I kneaded the clay it was very fun.

I also dreamed a lot in my childhood. I dreamed of going to school. In my mind, I imagined myself arriving at school with my backpack, my two ponytails, and wearing my pretty uniform with my black shoes and my long socks. I was very eager to study. When I was seven years old, I told my dad that I wanted to go to school. But we lived in the countryside, and there were no schools nearby. One of those days, my dad went to town and bought me a notebook and a pencil; he wrote my name in the notebook. "Now you do it," he said. I tried, but I didn't know how to

hold the pencil! That day I couldn't write any letters. I was saying I want to go to school and have a teacher to teach me.

After that, one day, my dad's friend visited us, and he told my dad, "Hey, send this girl to school, this girl would be a good student." And I was listening. I said to myself, "I wish my dad would listen to his friend. I really want to go to school." My siblings tried to teach me how to make letters. I was a very inquisitive girl. I asked my siblings the name of the letters, and I started putting the letters together like ma or pa. Subsequently, I learned how to write my name. But then I was very busy, helping my mom with my sister and my brother between me and my sister. Also, my siblings and I were helping our grandpa to collect coffee in the coffee field; that was so much fun. The coffee beans when you touch them feel fresh and smooth like a cherry and smell sweet like sugar. Meanwhile, in my free time I continued learning and asking questions. I remember wondering how it rains. Why does water come from the sky? They answered, "We don't know either!" I looked for my dad's books and I sat on the ground to see them outside of my house. And I enjoyed looking at these books. I didn't know what they said but I liked seeing the drawings that they had.

In my family we had the habit of getting together on my house porch. We met there once a week, and we worshiped God, read the Bible, and I learned to put words together to read the Bible. Sometimes I sang hymns, and my older brother played the guitar; and I loved it. Singing to God made me happy. I knew that I couldn't go to school at that time, but I was happy and grateful for my life, for my parents, because they took care of me even though they didn't have many resources. I thought about that and I just said, "Thank you for my life, thank you for my parents, because I love my life. It doesn't matter if I don't go to school now, one day I'll go." Jesus Christ was and is my superhero. I love Him but He loved me first. He is my rock and my savior. He is my shield. This is my story. To conclude, I want to thank all the teachers in the world. God

bless them and take care of them. They are important in the whole world. Thanks.

Two Haikus

by Marce Ramirez Solano

Books are food for brains
Our brain can eat what we read
Gobble up good books

Spring is good season
There are rain showers; rainbows
Spring is amazing

My History

by Marie Charley

My name is Marie Charley. I'm 57 years old, and I am from Haiti. I'm married and have two sons and three girls. They live in Pennsylvania, but I live here with a friend. But I have a big problem; I can't speak English. At home, everybody is speaking English. I need someone to help me. I come to school because I must speak. This is my passion. In the USA, if you don't speak English, you can't drive; it's very bad.

But it's never too late to do it.

Now, with the help of my teacher, I'm better.

Two Poems

by Qader

Soccer

I play soccer.
I was playing soccer in Afghanistan.
I played on the national soccer team.
I played soccer every week with my friends.
I like to watch soccer on TV.
I like to watch premier league soccer on TV.
My friends like soccer too.

Season

A year has four seasons: Summer, Spring, Winter, and Fall.
I like the Fall season.
My favorite season is Fall.
Fall is a beautiful season because the trees are a beautiful color.
I like to travel during the Fall season.

My Family

by Raquel Rangel

Hello, my name is Raquel!!

This year I've had a little fun. I've gone out with my family. Now we are planning a vacation to Florida, since it is one of my favorite places.

I try to see the negative things always as positive, and I really like being with my family!!

I Read Books in the Library

by Rawda Amro

I go to the library to read books.

I take books in English. I like learning English.

A book is a story. I like to read stories in the books. I like to read small books and short stories. I like to read real stories more than fictional ones in Arabic or English. My hobby is reading stories in English. When I find difficult words, I write them down. I'm writing the words in English. I go to the library on the weekend. I go to the library with my friends on the weekend. I walk to the library in the morning. I see other people walking too. I go and walk to the library to read books. I touch and smell books in the library. I drink coffee in the library.

The people in the library are quiet. Sometimes, I can hear happy kids. I look at the people in the library and find them reading calmly. The library is clean and good. The books are on shelves in the library.

Myself

by Sonia

I have been away from Syria for eleven years. I was in the fourth grade. A war started in my city.

I faced great danger for two years with war and fear. After years, I took refuge in Jordan because I did not feel safe in my country.

I left my home, my friends, and my school and started a new life in Jordan. The living conditions were very bad, but it is better than living in my country.

I left my studies for two years in Jordan. I was very afraid of everything because of the war, and I did not feel safe all the time.

I adapted with time and forced myself to coexist and returned to school. I stayed in Jordan for eight years. After that, my family was given an opportunity.

Asylum to the United States. I thought it was impossible to travel after a treatment that lasted five years.

My travel date was suddenly set, and one of my biggest dreams had come true. I must have been very sad about the separation of my sisters and friends, but every person has his own life, and I chose to live in the United States.

When I came, I cried. A lot, no. I expected that I would be alone, and I wanted to work a lot to speak the English language, but I did it, and now I speak the English language, and I obtained a secondary school certificate with high grades. Now I have begun to achieve some of my dreams, even though I did not enter the major I wanted at the university, but I am trying. I know that I have great opportunities in the future to work on myself, and I cannot despair after today. I always say thank you, Lord, that I have reached this stage in my life.

My Country Ain Barda

by Zhor Es Saidi

Good morning everybody. My name is Zhor, and I am 54 years old. I grew up in a mountainous village in the north of Morocco called Ain Barda. This village is distinguished by its charming beauty that combines mountains and beautiful nature. It also has beautiful and moderate weather. The lifestyle in the village is based on agriculture, where we find the olive season in the winter and the fig season in the summer. In addition, there are other seasonal crops such as bean crops, wheat, and grapes. I like my village because I have the good memories with my friends and my family.

Basketball Dreams

by Randy Adams

I see a real big crowd in the stands.
I feel the power every time I score a point.
I smell the different types of food and drinks.
I hear the screams from all the fans.
I have a taste to become a pro basketball player.

I see a good dream turn into a bad nightmare.
I feel the pains and hurts of the people that I let down
when I got in trouble with the law.
I smell the first scent of a jail cell.
I hear the yelling. The people want out of the pen.
I taste the jail food for the first time in my life.

An Essay

by Chontea Williams

A second in life makes me happy knowing God woke me up to continue my journey.

A minute of laughter brings out my bright personality.

Hours of self care makes me feel like a better person knowing I'm already pretty.

A day of being a help to the community can make the environment better.

A week with a better mindset than usual will help you accomplish a major goal.

A month with a full, organized schedule will relieve so much stress.

A half a year attending school will let me go further with my career.

A year learning a different language will increase analytical abilities.

A decade spending time on my luxury home will have me living my best life.

A lifetime of being the person I am, with a good personality and high vibrations, will push me further to help and be good to others.

An Essay

by Bryanna Owsley

A second into school, I wanted to leave, go home, and sleep in.

A minute of being there, I remembered why I came.

Hours of being there, my head started to hurt. It's cause I'm reading, but I gotta stay focused. My mind is crowded with numbers and words and phrases.

A day of being there, my thoughts are all over the place. *Why am I doing this! Go home. You got kids, they need more, stay paycheck to paycheck?* Them thoughts repeated.

A full week of me being there, the work starts to get clear. *You got this.* The math is complicated, cause it's too much, but it's worth it.

It's gonna go to a month in, I'm more proud of myself. I'm still here, making goals for myself. I will finish, get my CNA, show my kids they can do it no matter how many times you wanna give up.

A half year attaining. I'm graduated, I'm a CNA, a better person. My heart is jumping joy. The support system I begged for wasn't there, but God showed me the only support I needed was me. I hear loud roaring in my head. One goal down. You can do it.

A year learning. I'm in a better, stable place. I'm more passionate with life.

A decade creating mistake, life lessons made me grow as a person, better mother. I'm full, not empty. My past has been overlapped with my future. It's big, it's bright. My goals are accomplished.

A lifetime displaying growth, wealth, happiness. I am a nurse. I've furthered my career.

An Essay

by Rhonda Jacks

I have been a CNA for thirty-five years, and it came from having a passion to take care of the elderly. But I was taught by two women who are dear to me, which was my mother and my grandmother who taught me the ropes before I became the woman I have become.

I believe that receiving my GED would play a big part in the field that I want to do next, which is to go back to school to be an x-ray technician, but it also refreshes my brain on taking tests and learning things that I didn't know.

My main goal will reflect on this journey, it's going to reveal the part of me that thought I couldn't do when I knew I could.

A second in my childhood years reveals the woman I have become. A minute of laughter is supported around the people I have met through this journey. The hours result in what I have learned, and I'm still learning. A day can be trying to take care of as many things as possible, like if you have ever read *The Little Engine That Could*. Yes, I'm that little engine. I take a ticking and keep on ticking. A week of doing things is kinda crazy, because you can plan to do things all week, but then you sit back and think, "Did I get this done or did I forget to do something?" A month spent without electricity would probably open my eyes. Like, "Is this really happening to me?" I might think the world is coming to an end.

And when you look back, half of the year has passed me by. What did I accomplish within that half of a year? And a year learning about a whole different culture would probably blow my mind depending on what I'm learning about.

A decade creating would be very fundamental, because I done different things, so my decade of creating a dream home would be very fulfilling, because my dream home would be somewhere my children and grandchildren could

just gather up and have that “Sunday Dinner.” It would be a home-away-from-home setting.

A lifetime towards strangers would be that whatever you thought you couldn’t be, you can always achieve if you have that motivation and support.

A Lifetime Displaying

by Babie Reno

A lifetime displaying acts of kindness towards strangers inspires me because of how nice I am. When I give someone clothing, a hot meal, and a nice cold kool-aid, it really warms my heart.

I have did acts of kindness all of my adulthood, never realizing that one day God would bless me. He has blessed me with freedom from addiction. He has also blessed me with a new attitude.

Also when I do help others, I don't get haughty or look down on others, but my heart is warmed when I help others.

I don't mind helping a perfect stranger, and I feel that's what God has put me here for. It's my calling.

Thinking Outside the Box

Exercise Led by Ray Lucas

For this exercise, students wrote about a time when thinking outside of the box impacted their lives for better or worse.

Destiny Richardson

Me wanting a better life for me and my daughter, but my daughter is four now and in school herself, so everyday I tell myself, “If my four-year-old can go to school everyday then so can I.” My daughter likes to give up a lot, and I believe she got that from me. I used to give up so fast, and I wanted to prove to my daughter that giving up is not an option! So, one morning I woke up and decided it was time to go back, and when I walk the stage my daughter going to walk with me so she can understand that we don’t give up and anything is possible.

Beatrice McKinzy

What open my box is, I waited to go back to school and get my GED, and I am so happy that I am back in school. I am going to do it this time, no matter what I’m going through. I am going to do it this time.

Rhonda Jacks

The way I keep my box open was, I came back to school to focus on the ability to make my establishment in life more firm for my future goals. CNA is what was thirty-five years ago x-ray technician—it was my long term goals, but I believe I can do much more as time goes by, because God gave me the ability to move forward in life, not backwards, and my life is what I make it. Honorable, successful, and free-hearted.

Albert James

I did not know how to read a book, so I went to school to learn how to read a book!

Tanya Harris

I called one of my aunties over the phone one day. Shared with her that I was making a transition in going back to school to obtain my GED. She encouraged me by stating that, "If anyone can get their GED, you can!" Meaning myself. I believe to this day on account of her believing enough in me, being able to achieve this dream. I never forgot her positivity, that miraculously rubbed off on me. To this very day, I still have my GED posted in a certificate of completion on my wall. I am here at Literacy KC to further my education, to go back to Penn Valley, to work on a scholarship or whatever and however Jesus wants to direct my life in the course, is my philosophy.

Masilya Kawende

First of all, I was coming here without anything in my mind about English, but after learning more and more, I am trying myself, and I am so, so happy for that. The value is, because this education will help me to be comfortable in society, will help me again to make sure that in my family I will be stable and stronger than before. I will also be capable to set more information of the country, and staying stable as much as I can. Through the end in my life, I will try to help others.

Lakita Washington

What opened my box in life was that I needed to further my education, because it is very important. You need your education for better paying jobs. That is, some of the questions they ask you when doing an application. I tried once before to further my education, but the devil

was busy in my ear, saying *you can't do this*. I got pregnant at an early age and just didn't think my education was important until I got in my early forties and realized that education is the key. I keep coming because I want to be one who walks across the stage. I have my children rooting for me and my grandbabies. Education is the key in my life.

Marites Lovings

First of all, life is full of journeys, such as turning points of many emotions. I have a few examples in my life growing up experiencing full on trauma, such as poverty, abuse, and dealing with different abusive people. I became a closed box, meaning I have so much trauma. Secondly, I did look back in my life, that I was able to face each trauma by facing all my fears, such as by pursuing education, working hard, and avoiding situations that will cause me pain. Third, I came out of the box by allowing myself to not be afraid and truly loving me. By doing that, I decided each step and success belongs to me. In conclusion, I open the box of life, standing that I can do it or face every obstacle in life, by loving myself. Not being afraid to heal from trauma.

Do (Not) Define Me

Exercise Led by Ray Lucas

Students wrote one positive characteristic and one negative on a piece of paper. These words were mixed up and handed out to students, with some getting two negatives or two positives. Ray asked students to write about how they felt those characterizations were true or untrue about them. See the results!

Bad / Joy

by Bernadette Graves

Bad is not who I portray myself to be now. In the past, I made unwise choices. I choose to be the opposite of bad, which is good.

I used to be unhappy, once upon a time, by way of making unwise decisions. I choose, today, to be joy, which is even better than happy. Happy equates as being happy according to happenstance situations. Joy is joy unspeakable, which over-exceeds happiness.

Stupid / Dishonest

by Albert James

I am not a stupid person! He is a stupid person!
I am not dishonest!

Smart / Healthy

by Destiny Richardson

I do agree that I am smart. I love to learn new things, and I catch onto them really fast.

My health is okay. I have a few things going on, but my health will get better. I work on fixing what I need to fix to get my health back right. I am too young to be going through kidney stones and high blood pressure.

Respectable

by Beatrice McKinzy

I am a respectable person, I do agree.

Perserverance / Dumb

by Marites Lovings

Yes, it's my value. If I did not have this characteristic, I would not be here. I have been persevering for a long time.

Well, this is opposite that value. Dumb is a frame of mind that's not cultivated by great value, such as leaving or being successful.

Tardy / Authentic

by Lakita Washington

I'm not ever tardy, always on time. Because being tardy can disturb somebody from what they have going on.

Yes, I'm authentic. Very trustworthy. I am on a journey to succeed.

Kind

by Masilya Kawende

For example, the same kind, as if you want something and you need to adjust another for the same type, the same level, the same size. This word is very important to use.

So, one reason why I say kind is an adjective of quantity, is because it shows us what size, volume, quality you want.

Kind is very important for human beings, because that's what makes significance for us.

Proud / Humility

by Rhonda Jacks

I agree I have a lot of pride.

I agree with humility, because I'm very humble.

Class 710 - Our Origins

*Taught by Melinda Brown-Mason and
Heather Mechem*

Eduardo Gonzalez

My name is Eduardo. I am 46 years old. I live in Kansas City. I live with my brother. My job is cooking at a restaurant.

Smindaycar Zamor

My name is Zamor. I am from Haiti. I am twenty years old. I live with my father and my sister. I like action movies. I came to the United States for work.

Linda Elizabeth Ramos Medina

My name is Elizabeth. I am from Ecuador. I came to the United States for work. I am learning English because I want to be able to communicate better at work.

Dachmine Gedeon

My name is Dachmine Gedeon. I am nineteen years old. I am from Haiti. I came to the United States because of the political situation. I am learning English because I really like English. I like to read, listen to music, dance, cook and speak English. My favorite food is rice and fish. My favorite colors are pink and black. I have four brothers. I don't have a sister. I like my family. I don't like corn. I like watching TV.

Esdras Erassaint

My name is Esdras. I'm from Haiti. I'm twenty-four years old. I like agronomy. I don't have a job. I live with my brother. I live in Kansas City, Missouri.

Paul Erassaint

My name is Paul. I'm from Haiti. It's my country. I'm twenty-seven years old. I like to study and learn medicine. I don't have a job, but I need so much to work. I live with my brother. I live in Kansas City.

Edeline Jean Pierre

My name is Edeline Jean Peirre. I am from Haiti. I like to teach. I want a job as a nurse. I live with my sister. I like Kansas City, Missouri. I like to come to class. I have two sisters. I have two brothers. I like English class. I like the classroom.

Ana Ramirez

My name is Ana. I came to the United States because my brother was sick. I like to do nails and eyelashes. I like to learn English.

Manuel Ayala

My name is Manuel. I came to the United States because of family and work. I am twenty-six years old. I am from Mexico. I like to make friends. I like music. I don't like avocado.

Julie Lucien

My name is Julie. I am from Haiti. I live in Kansas City. I like my family. I like my daughter. I like to speak English.

Rehema Mlondani

My name is Rehema. I'm from Tanzania. I am twenty-four years old. I like to sing. I live with my family in Kansas City.

Hawa Isak

My name is Hawa. I am from Somalia. I came to the United States as a refugee. I am working in home health care. I like my job. I go to school because I need to read and write English.

Rahma Yusuf

My name is Rahma. I am from Somalia. I am a refugee. I like to cook Somalian food. I cook rice, soup, vegetables, and chicken. It tastes good. I take English class to speak and write.

Haret Kassim

My name is Haret. I am from Somalia. I came to the United States as a refugee. I like to speak English. I like my children.

Idoly Sagastume

My name is Idoly Veronica. I'm twenty-four years old. I'm from Guatemala. I came to the states to look for a better future for myself. I have a son. My job is cleaning. I am studying English to have a better job. My dream is to be a painting instructor. I like reading and listening to music.

Manuel Cortez

My name is Juan. I am from Mexico. I like being in the countryside and going for a walk.

Vines of Truth



About Literacy KC

Vision

Literacy For All

Mission

To advance literacy within the Kansas City metropolitan area through direct services, advocacy, and collaboration.

History

Literacy KC was founded in 1985 by volunteers to provide one-on-one tutoring to adults wanting to learn how to read and write but who did not have the resources to do so. In 2015, Literacy KC developed an innovative community and classroom-based model to meet the needs of a larger student audience. This new adult-literacy program, Ticket to Read, served as the first expansion of Literacy KC's services that have since only continued to grow.

Literacy KC has since added High School Equivalency, English Language Learning, Workforce Development, Digital Literacy, and Let's Read to our offerings.

As a regional and national leader in adult education, Literacy KC has made waves in our field by providing state-of-the-art curriculum following Federal College and Career Readiness Standards.

Support Literacy KC

Become a Volunteer

Volunteers are part of the fabric of our organization. From tutoring in HiSET or ESL classes and modeling best practices in our family reading program, to making the everyday at our offices go smoothly, volunteers add so much value to our programs.

Sign up for Volunteer Training

Join us to learn about our work and participate in training! Sign up by visiting our website or calling (816) 333-9332.

You can also
scan this QR code:



Donate to Literacy KC

To ensure that our programs remain free and high quality, Literacy KC relies on the generous support of community members, businesses, and foundations. Consider supporting our programs by making a gift.

Gifts may be mailed to:

Literacy KC
3036 Troost Ave.
Kansas City, MO 64109

You can also give by
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