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*Reading for Life* is a collection of stories, poems and other writings submitted by student authors, all of whom are participants in the Literacy Suffolk program. Many are writing for the first time. Each author's work is published as written, with occasional minor editing to improve readability.



A Letter from the President

## Brightening Corners and Lighting Pathways

By Dr. Al Jordan, Board President

"Brighten the corner where you are. Someone far from the harbor you may guide across the bar."

**T**he refrain above is from a song I learned over 50 years ago while attending a Salvation Army day camp when I was growing up in Queens. I sang it with energy, fervor, and probably off key not really grasping the meaning, but believing that it was important to learn and repeat. Each day I anxiously waited for that refrain and I would look up and sing as loud as possible. For some reason, those words touched my heart and mind. Years later, I realized that brightening our corners allowed us to be beacons, but not just for ourselves. Rather, each of us could light a pathway for others to become beacons themselves.

Brightening corners and lighting pathways for others is the core of what we do at Literacy Suffolk, Inc. Our sole motivation is to help others succeed. For over 30 years, Literacy Suffolk has stood firmly in the belief that the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively is critical to personal freedom and the maintenance of a democratic society. This statement is still true, enduringly vibrant, and necessary in the year 2009. Whatever our dreams, ambitions, or initiatives, our first priority will always be to brighten the pathway to success for our students.

We have trained more than 6,000 volunteers and tutored over 11,000 students. Today, we serve students from 59 countries. We have earned a reputation for providing caring and culturally sensitive service that maintains the dignity and self-respect of our students while providing the most up-to-date curriculum for our tutors based upon sound research in adult education. In addition, we continue to increase the awareness of adult literacy in helping others to overcome the myths and stereotypes often associated with those in need of literacy services. Literacy has no face. It is you, me, our friends and neighbors.

Difficult economic times require that each of us ensure that our beacons remain vibrant and strong. Our goal is to continue to increase the awareness of a need for adult literacy services that are accessible, comprehensive, and culturally sensitive. We have many corners that are bright and committed to continuing our work throughout Suffolk County. We are fortunate to have a Board of Directors and Advisory Council that commit time, energy and resources to ensure that Literacy Suffolk continues to be a leader in the field of adult literacy. Our tutors, library partners, and elected officials are bolstered by the loyal support from the individual, corporate, and foundation donors. Our vision is clear, our goals are solid, and our desired outcomes are achievable. Most importantly, our beacon continues to shine and brighten the corners where we are.

## A Soulful Needle and Spirited Messages

Gini Booth, Executive Director

“...through their lives and stories runs a common thread — literacy has empowered them to overcome fear, achieve goals and believe in their ability to accomplish even greater things.” Claire Lamberti



Having written the novel “How to Make an American Quilt,” I am constantly asked the question, “Do you quilt?” This is really a variation of a question asked of all fiction writers when readers want to know how much of what has been written is “real”. Good fiction is always true, but it is not always real. Let me put it another way. I don’t quilt. I don’t even sew. For many years before I wrote the book, I was drawn to quilts and quilting. Not the ginghamy, homespun quilts that are used for interior decorating and nothing more. No, I loved the ones that capture the artistry (both fine and native), skill, lives, and desires of the women who stitched them. The sort of quilts that, with very little fanfare, quietly engage the heart. The sort of quilt that I longed to make. However, I did not know any quilters, nor had I ever sat in on a quilting bee. Most importantly, I did not know how to sew. But I did know how to write . . . I allocated one square — and one chapter — per character . . . A quilt of words, if not of fabric.

*Excerpt – “From Paper to Cloth” By Whitney Otto*

I, too, have always been attracted to quilts; as a little girl, the colors and designs simply tickled my curiosity and delighted my spirit! I remember on a visit to family in Washington, DC, gracing the bed in the guestroom, was the most magnificent quilt that my eyes had ever seen — brilliant colors and garden designs. I found out that a great aunt had quilted it many years before. The next day, I explored my family’s majestic old house, and found a room filled with quilts, some hanging, others folded neatly on quilt stands. I spent hours that day, looking at each quilt, imagining what might have been on my great aunt’s mind as she soulfully stitched. What was her message? From that day, I’ve been fascinated by quilts.

In addition to the artistry of a quilt, it is the story that each stitch represents — clues to the past, visions for the future and current status. Many of the quilt patterns, around the Civil War, were designed to convey secret messages for slaves to escape (it was illegal for slaves to learn how to read and write). The quilts, crafted with symbols and codes, were draped over a porch rail, on a clothesline or some other non-suspicious place in a sequence. For example, the “north star” design meant escape north to Canada, a “sailboat” design indicated

that water was nearby, along with a “flying geese” pattern, the geese providing the direction.

Writers have something in common with quilt makers — each telling a story. The quilt maker uses a needle, weaving patches of fabric together, creating designs. The writer uses a pen, pencil or the spirited click of a computer keyboard to share experiences (patches of life) through the creative use of words. No doubt this year’s *Reading for Life* authors have woven tales about the patches on their personal quilt.

I am so appreciative of the beautiful and extraordinary commemorative quilt that adorns the cover of *Reading for Life 2009* and equally as appreciative of the stories between the covers.

With humble spirit,  
Gini

A Most Generous Thank You to Literacy Suffolk’s . . .  
Adult Student Authors  
Quilt Committee and Quilters  
Adult Students, Tutors and Testers  
Board of Directors and Advisory Council  
Staff

# Credits

*Profound congratulations are extended to the dedicated and determined volunteers whose steadfast tutoring, mentoring, and encouragement led their students to put thoughts and feelings on paper and share with us their lives and stories.*

## TUTORS

	Ruth Harris	Carol Link	Mary Sanford
Theresa Aloisio	Gretchen Haynes	Patricia Nielsen	Eileen Sribnick
Philip Carey	Jim Higgins	Eve Novick	Carin Storer
Diana P. Davies	Gloria Jones	Linda Penn	Sheila Sussman
Maggie DeLollis	Diane B. Jost	Lynn Perry	Frances Zepp
Beth Donovan	Marsha Kipperman	Christina L. Ratliff	
Barbara Golden	Bonnie Kisiel	Sarah Saltzman	

*Volunteers contributed their skill and vision to create the Literacy Suffolk, Inc. 30th Anniversary Commemorative Quilt. This delightful symbol of craftsmanship, depicts the diversity of Long Island and symbols of learning, literacy and freedom.*

## QUILTERS

	Jennifer Frye	Lynn Kollmar	Patches 'n Pieces Quilt Club
Eileen Best	Lynn Greener	Paula Madison	Beth Pile
Linda Bokuniewicz	Alice Haselbach	Linda McIvor	Loretta Piscatella
Ina Casali	Pauline Hazzard	Ellen McLaughlin	Elaine Graf Radenberg
Lucille Corbett	Jean Lamberti	Dorothea Menze	Lynn Rokoff
Beverly Delaney	Kathleen Kiss	Michelle Miroff	Betty Schaeppi
Barbara Downs	Judy Knorr	Carol Ann Nolan	Marian Shipley

**Co-editors** ..... Ina Casali & Susan Shiloni

**Design/Layout:** ..... Fleury Design



**To learn more about Literacy Suffolk programs or to support adult literacy, visit us online at [www.LiteracySuffolk.org](http://www.LiteracySuffolk.org).**

# Two Things Great and New

By Scott Cali

I would like to tell you about two new and special things in my life. The first is about someone very important—who is also my best friend and fiancée—Suzanne.

Suzanne and I met on the computer a year and a half ago with the help of my niece, Elena. First, we exchanged emails for a while to get to know each other. Elena helped by typing the emails as I spoke to her the words I wanted to say to Suzanne. This was when I was just beginning to learn to read and write. Elena also would read the emails from Suzanne. I owe a lot to her for all her help.

Next, Suzanne and I spoke on the phone and got to know each other better. Finally, we set the day and time to meet. I was excited to meet Suzanne, but I was also nervous. We met for the first time, followed by our first date. That's where we really clicked. We talked for hours. As time went on, we grew closer. As we grew closer, we became inseparable. We spent every day together and found a lot of things to do that we shared an interest in. We still do things we both enjoy even if it's something new to one or the other.

One of the things we enjoyed doing was going to Maryland during this past summer. We went to visit Suzanne's cousin, Paul, and his wife, Carol, who live in an intentional community. It is very interesting since all the families work closely together. They eat together and they play together. Most of them are vegetarians and the variety of foods is remarkable to me. The people in the community were very nice.

One highlight of the trip was my driving all the way there and back because I never drove that far by myself. Although Suzanne did tell me which roads we had to go on, I was able to read the signs. I was very proud of myself. It was a good trip for both of us and very special to me.

Another memorable time for me and Suzanne, and one that I enjoyed, was when we went to Palmer Vineyards for a wine tasting. We tasted various wines and enjoyed cheese and crackers with our wine. Next, we went on a self-guided tour to learn how to make wine from grapes. On the day we went, there were many things going on like a barbecue, hay rides, and a live band. It was fun. These experiences brought Suzanne and me closer. Our relationship keeps growing closer with every experience that we share.

These are the two very special things in my life: Suzanne, and the experiences that we share.

*“My name is Scott. I am 42 years old and currently live in Calverton with my parents. I have recently met my future wife and this story tells about my experiences with her and how our relationship came to be. I would like to personally thank Literacy Suffolk as well as my niece Elena for her help with these reading matters.”*



Scott with Suzanne and Elena

# Miracle for My Brother

By Mary Berrospi

In Lima, Perú, everybody calls October the purple month because it is the color people wear when they celebrate *Señor de los Milagros* (the Lord of Miracles). On October 18th and 28th, many thousands of people take part in a procession after the 6:00 a.m. Mass. The procession continues for two days and nights with different people marching. All the women wear purple dresses and the men wear purple capes.

It is an important time for Catholic people to ask for a miracle, and sometimes they receive it. My family received a miracle. When my second brother was a year old, he couldn't walk because he was in great pain. My mother visited different doctors, and the diagnosis was problems in his back. He needed a transplant of the bone. He waited for somebody to donate one little bit of bone.

For seven years he had to wear a cast over his whole torso and he looked like a turtle. My mother had to carry him everywhere. All this time, my mother prayed for a miracle. Every year, she carried him in the procession for *Señor de los Milagros*. She promised God that she would march in the procession every year for her entire life, and she would wear the same purple dress.

Then one day the doctor said to my mother, "You are lucky!" He had a patient with one extra bone in his knee. This patient was the same age as my brother. The doctors did the operations on the two boys at the same time and put the bone in the spinal column of my brother. After the operation, my brother could walk, and he went to school for the first time at nine years old. Now my brother is 54 years old. He is a teacher, a psychologist, and

a principal at a private school for little kids. He and his wife have owned this school for almost 30 years.

When I lived in Perú, I went with my mother to this procession each year. Now my mother is going with my sister. She kept her promise to God all this time.

*In Perú, Mary worked as a bank secretary and also owned a restaurant with her husband René. They came to the United States with their young daughter Miluska eleven years ago. Since then, Miluska has graduated from high school and is enrolled in college. Mary's older daughter, Vanessa, has also come to this country and is now married. Her son René joined them for a while, but he has moved back to Perú with his wife and daughter. Mary currently works full time in a high school cafeteria and part time in a hair salon. She and René are very happy to be in this country and hope to receive their residency papers soon, so they can begin the process of qualifying for citizenship. They still maintain close ties with their extended family in Perú.*



# The Colors of Happiness

By Nadezda Meldere



Nadia Meldere and Flowers

I want to tell you about my beautiful garden. My profession is botanist. A long time ago, I studied in a botanical college in Ukraine. Around the college was a beautiful garden. There were many different flowers. I had a dream to have a garden of my own. I saved money for a summer garden. When I moved to Riga, the capital city of Latvia, I made a garden and I was very happy. All who saw my flowers admired them.

We moved five years ago to Riverhead, in the United States. For three years, we were living in an apartment and we only had flowers indoors. Again, I saved money and we bought a mobile home with a little land. Around the home, I made a small garden. Now I am happy again. I planted red, pink, and yellow tulips, purple crocus, yellow daffodils, yellow and blue hyacinth, lilies of various colors, purple clematis, and yellow and brown gaillardias.

The flowers begin blooming in the early spring and grow until the frost of autumn. Now it is December and all my flowers are frozen. The perennial flowers will rest until next spring, and I will miss them through the winter.

*Nadia has been in the Literacy Suffolk program for three years and previously had a story published in "Reading for Life" (2007). It was a story about the city of Riga where she lived for many years. She was born in Ukraine but lived for many years in Riga, Latvia. She is a dedicated student who rarely misses a class. She works in retail and in home personal care.*

## My Family

By Sung Yong Min

Ryder

Strong, active

Watching, playing, learning

Likes games

My son!

Gloria

Cute, smart

Dancing, watching, hugging

Likes to dress up

My daughter!

Grace

Cute, strong

Studying, dancing, swimming

A fantastic mom

My wife!

*Sung Yong and his wife Grace have a four year old son and a 19 month old daughter. The family enjoys swimming at the beach in the summer. They have lived in Deer Park for two years.*

# Guatemalan Prayer

By Ausberto Argueta

I was born in a small village called Santa Maria Naranjo, Coatepeque, Guatemala. My parents, brother, three sisters and I lived on a small farm. We grew corn, beans, and cotton. We did not have much money and life was hard. There was a revolution near us and once our house was burned down. We all worked very hard and my parents built the house again.

When I was 30 years old, I came to the United States for a better life and to help my family. My mother gave me some money to help me because I had none. In the beginning, life in the United States was also hard. My first job paid only \$20 per day. I picked tomatoes and eggplant in the hot Florida sun

all day. I prayed to God to help me because I was alone here with no one to help me. My mother also prayed for me and all the family in Guatemala. God heard the prayers and helped me.

I moved to Long Island eleven years ago. Now my life in the United States is good. I work hard and I do not smoke or drink. I send money to help my family in Guatemala.

*Ausberto has been in the Literacy Suffolk program, most recently, for six months. He works hard and regularly attends classes. He had studied in the program in the past.*

# Winter Vacation in Mexico

By Gabriela Sanchez and Nicolas Garduno

There were many beautiful photographs at a recent art show at the Harborfields Library.

One of the photos showed a group of Monarch butterflies. We remembered that these butterflies, and all the Monarch butterflies in the United States and Canada, migrate to Michoacan, Mexico for the winter.

They begin their long trip south in September and arrive in Mexico in early November.

These butterflies travel about 50 miles per day and over 2000 miles to their final destination.

There is a butterfly sanctuary in Michoacan and there are over 4 million butterflies per acre. The sanctuary is 8500 feet in altitude. You can hike up the mountain or take a truck or a horse. The butterflies feed on milkweed which makes them poisonous to the birds which would like to eat them. They nest in giant oyamel fir trees. In the spring, they begin their migration north and they mate and lay eggs along the way.

# Happy New Year from Kiev!

By Aleksandra Torokhova

New Year's Day in the Ukraine is celebrated in mostly the same way as in America on January 1st each year. Around noontime on New Year's Eve, everyone starts preparing food and getting ready to celebrate. In the Ukraine, kids love this holiday because this is when Ded Moroz (Freezing Grandfather) comes and brings them presents. He is like Santa Claus in the United States. At night, everyone eats special foods of kielbasa, chicken, and carp and drinks a lot of champagne. Other traditional dishes are prepared and served. *Olevye* is a salad of potatoes, green peas, carrots, hard-boiled eggs, mayonnaise, and bologna meat. *Shuba* is a tasty salad of sliced and layered potatoes, onions, herring, and beets.

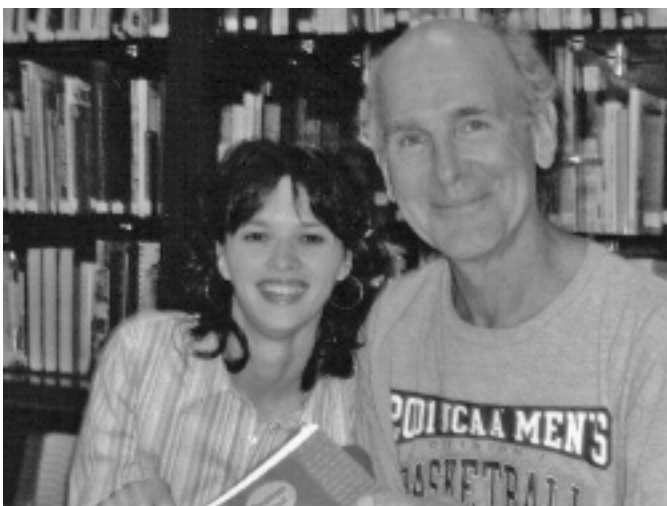
Presents are exchanged and everyone waits in excitement for midnight. When it nears twelve o'clock, all watch TV and listen to a congratulatory speech by the Ukrainian President. He talks about what the country can look forward to in the next twelve months.

When twelve o'clock strikes, everyone cheers and toasts the New Year. Afterwards, everybody goes to the local Christmas tree, which is located in the center of his or her city or town. Everybody sings songs about New Year's, shoots off fireworks, drinks beer, champagne & vodka, and congratulates and wishes each other good luck in the New Year. This holiday is special to me because all the family comes together. Everyone, old and young, is full of joy. I am very happy because I will celebrate New Year 2009 in my hometown of Kiev with my family in Ukraine.

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"This holiday is special to me because all the family comes together. Everyone, old and young, is full of joy."

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Sasha and tutor, Phil Carey

*Aleksandra, or "Sasha" as she is called by her friends, is married and has a five year old daughter, Sashunya. Aleksandra studied law in Kiev and has been part of Literacy Suffolk for two years.*

# My Beautiful Son

By Maria Garcia

**M**y name is Maria. I'm a new mother. I have a baby. His name is Jose. He was supposed to be born on June 28th, but he came early. He was born on June 4th. I didn't have him naturally. I had a Caesarean Section. It was painful for me, but when Jose was born I didn't feel a thing. The next day it was very hard to stand up because it was painful. Now I am feeling fine.

When I first knew I was pregnant, I was worried about how much work it was going to be for me. I cook everyday, but it's not bad now because I find I have enough time to do everything. It is hard, but I'm thankful to God for the gift he gave me, my son. When I go to work, I take him to the babysitter. Then my husband picks him up in the evening. He loves Jose, too, and is always playing with him.

It's beautiful to have a baby. They are lovely. At first it's hard because they don't sleep when they are little, but then they start to sleep longer. Now, Jose sleeps all night and only cries when he is hungry. He likes to shower, play and laughs when I tickle him. He is my first baby and I am very happy to have him.

*My name is Maria Garcia. I am 23 years old and am from El Salvador. I want to thank my tutor, Ruth, for helping me to improve my English. She is a good person and a good teacher. I also want to thank Literacy Suffolk for giving this help to people who want to learn English.*

# The Cart

By Yesenia Villatoro

**I** came from El Salvador in 2005. In my country I was employed. I worked in a bank where everybody talked about the big American dream, so I decided to come to this country. I was surprised when I got here because I didn't speak English well enough. The first two years were very hard in my life! When I went to the store, people talked to me and I didn't understand. I remember an experience when I went to Marshall's one employee said, "Please don't take out the cart," and the only thing I knew to say was "OK", and I kept going out of the store. Then a man told me in Spanish what

she had said to me. I felt so bad! That day I knew I had to learn more English, so I went to the Huntington Public Library where they helped me very much. I just want to thank Mrs. Pat a lot.

*Yesenia is a young mother of a three year old son. She is working hard to improve her English. Patricia Nielsen enjoys tutoring her.*



# The Beauty of Beijing

By Jackie Liang

**B**eijing is an old, beautiful, and historic city. There are many beautiful gardens, great buildings, and museums. In 2001, my family went to Shanghai. While we were there, my husband and I brought our children to travel and explore Beijing. The flight from Beijing to Shanghai was three hours long. We stayed in Wang Fu Jing Hotel.

The next day, we went to Gu Gong Palace Museum. It was formerly called the Forbidden City and served as the residence of the Ming and Qing emperors. Gu Gong is the largest and best preserved existing work of ancient architecture in the world. It covers an area of 72 hectares (178 acres) and consists of over 9000 palaces and halls which are surrounded by a city wall and a moat. Gu Gong can be divided into the Outer Palace and Inner Court. In the Outer Palace, there are three main halls. There, the emperors exercised imperial power and held important ceremonies. The Inner Court is the residential quarters of the royal family.

The third day, we went to the Great Wall at Ba Da Ling. We took the cable car to the middle of the wall. When we got to the middle, we climbed to the top of the wall. There was a sign that said, “If you’re not sweaty, then you never got to the top!” We spent a half hour climbing the wall. We were tired when we finally arrived at the top, but we were proud to be standing on top of the Great Wall of China. We looked around at the amazing wall. We took a moment to remember our ancestors, the ones who accomplished this great feat.

On the fourth day, we went to Yi He Yuan (Summer Palace). This is China’s best preserved imperial garden, famous for its scenery and cultural relics. This is where the Empress Ci Xi used to receive diplomatic envoys. We also ate king’s food in their restaurant.



The next day, we went to Ming Tombs. This is one of the best preserved imperial tombs. Many emperors were buried here. It is the burial place of 13 Ming emperors and 23 empresses. In 1956, the underground Palace of Ding Ling was excavated and over 3000 pieces of precious relics had been unearthed, including the gold crown and imperial robe.

The following day we went to visit Yong He Lamastery. This palace was prince Yong’s before he was promoted to Emperor Yong Zheng. After Yong Zheng ascended the throne, it became a lama temple. On the eighth day, we went to visit Grand View Garden. This recently built garden has been patterned after scenes described in the classic Chinese novel, *Dream of the Red Chamber*. We also spend two days visiting Tian’anmen Square and walking around the lively streets. We still had a few places to visit, but we didn’t have time to stay in Beijing.

After a ten day trip, we went back to Shanghai and were ready to go back to New York. This was a good trip. We all enjoyed this trip a lot.

# It Pays to Work Hard

By Sandra Duarte

**I**ne winter my husband wasn't working, and we didn't have any money. I went to look for a job. I went to an agency to apply, and I got the job as a temporary worker. They told me to start work the next day. I started working at the company, but I was getting paid by the agency and was getting less money than those working for the company. I was temporary, but I was working hard. When you are temporary, you have to work even harder to show the company what a good worker you are. I hoped when they saw how well I worked, they would hire me. Two weeks later, the company hired me. I got so excited because I wanted to make more money and be able to have all the benefits, like medical insurance, vacation and sick days.

When I got hired by the company, I started as a "flex" worker. A flex worker means someone the company sent home when they didn't have enough work. Because I was a good worker, I never got sent home. I started at one level and moved up to a

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"I started at one level and moved up to a better paid position. I learned English and the computer system."

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better paid position. I learned English and the computer system. I worked hard to learn English first and that was the hardest part for me. However, I was still a flex worker, and I wanted to be a permanent employee.

Finally, I am a permanent employee, and this is how I got there. A friend who I used to work with told his boss about me. He told the boss how good I was. The boss called me in to his office

and explained this new job to me. He offered me the position and I said yes. Even though I got what I want, I'm still working hard.

*Sandra Duarte came from El Salvador. She lives here with her husband and two daughters. She has been studying with her tutor for over two years and has a good job. She works for a large company and this is her story about how she got her job.*

# Ready, Set, Go

By Maria del Carmen Guanga

I was nervous. It was hard to concentrate. I had to drink water. The day was here. My Uncle Alberto drove me to the Springs Fire House. I walked into the room and spoke to the man there. I said, “I’m here to vote.”

I had registered a month before in East Hampton by mail. I had to be at least eighteen years old and a citizen of the U.S, and I was. When I got to the Springs Fire House one of the workers asked me if I needed any assistance in how to use the machines. He asked me if I would prefer the help in Spanish or English and I said Spanish. Another man explained the levers to me in Spanish. Then it was easy to use the voting machine. I felt so emotional voting in the United States for the very first time.

I think it is very important to vote in all elections because it gives you the chance to

tell what you think. I watched television and saw two of the presidential debates. They helped me to choose which candidate would be better for this country. I don’t think a citizen should complain if they don’t vote because each vote can make a difference. Many times people who don’t vote are ignorant. I was happy with the results of the election.

*Maria del Carmen Guanga was born in Elmhurst Hospital in Queens. In 1992, she went to Ecuador with her family. Her Uncle Alberto stayed in the United States. Maria graduated from high in Ecuador in 2007 and came to East Hampton later that year to live with her Uncle Alberto. She is working at the Bridgehampton Head Start. Maria’s dream is to go to college and she is finding out about Suffolk County Community College.*

# I Changed My Life

By Telmo Bohorquez

My name is Telmo Bohorquez. I am from Ecuador. This is for myself because I needed to change my life for my family. This opportunity was to become a U.S. citizen. On June 2, 2008, I went to the U.S. District Court in Central Islip for the Naturalization ceremony. I am happy because Gretchen helped me so much in everything — in speaking, reading. I appreciate her because she helped me pass the test.

I am happy for myself and my children Kevin, Lisset, Jeremy, and for Javanny my new family.



Telmo Bohorquez and his sons

# My Dream

By Juan Montes

I came to this country five years ago. I traveled by myself. I moved in with my uncle and his wife in their apartment. My uncle has a boy who is seven years old. I don't see him that much because I work when he is home. When I'm home I like to read the Bible, listen to music, watch TV, clean my room and use my new computer.

English with a tutor and I am taking an ESOL class. I hope to go home in a few years to be with my family.

*When Juan was a little boy he used to hear people say good things about the U.S. They said you can earn more money and buy a house. Even though he was the only one in his family except for his uncle, it was his dream to live in the U.S.*

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"I would like to become a citizen because the opportunity in this country is good."

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There are many differences between the US and my country, Honduras. The weather and the number of cars are very different. There is more opportunity here. When I came to this country, I became a cook. Other people taught me how. Some of the dishes I cook are Chicken Francese and Seafood Paella.

I came here to earn a little more money to help my family. I would like to become a citizen because the opportunity in this country is good. I like the culture here. I am learning



*Juan standing in front of his new home*

## Once at Night...

By Galina Polyanskaya

Once in the late evening a young girl named Kelly drove in a car from her friends' place to home. Suddenly the alarm warning light on the dashboard went on and in a few minutes the car made a noise and stopped. Kelly was going to call to a car service or to her friends, but unluckily the phone battery had gone dead. It happened unfortunately as the car broke beside an old cemetery. It was a long distance to home if she kept on the road, but there was a shortcut if she crossed the cemetery. Kelly didn't care to go that way. She was a quite modern young girl, but she quivered at the thought of the night cemetery.

Suddenly, Kelly saw a young man walking his dog. She got out of the car and went to him.

"Excuse me, could you please help me? My car is broken and I have to go to home through the cemetery. Could you accompany me, please?" "Yes, of course. Why not?" said the young man calmly.

They entered the cemetery. Tombstones, crosses and monuments closed round them. Kelly and the young man saw them well in full moonlight. She involuntarily was squeezing the young man's shoulder. All at once Kelly felt something gentle touching her face. She shivered and seized the young man's arm. "What is that?" "It's just a spider's web and nothing else," answered the young man. They moved along. At that time, Kelly saw a dark shadow pass over one tombstone. "What was that?" she asked quickly. "I think that it was a bat. They are usually active at this time of the

year." Kelly calmed down. But now she saw some sparkling lights. The young man caught sight of her fear and gave a laugh. "It's only fireflies."

They came to the cemetery exit. "Thank you so much," said Kelly. "You are welcome," answered the young man. This walk seemed to her almost romantic: the summer night, the moonlight, a quiet and self-confident young man, a beautiful dog... Kelly repeated her thanks: "It was very kind of you. I have definitely viewed too many horror films and pictured in my head ghosts, vampires, zombies and others deadly creatures. I was afraid..."

"But why are you afraid of us?" asked the young man and his eyes started to shine green.

*My name is Galina Polyanskaya, I'm Russian. I live in Rocky Point and learn English in ESOL courses in Brookhaven National Laboratory. Also I'm a volunteer French teacher. I have a three-year-old son and he is adorable.*



## White Valentine's Day

By Ru Jiang



My hometown is in Changsha City, Hunan Province, which is in the south central part of China. We have four seasons in a year, basically like here in Long Island; the difference between each season is huge and obvious.

In winter, if the temperature is low enough, it will snow. I haven't seen a very big snowfall in many years, probably because of the warmer environment these years. If it snows, we like to go out and play in the whole white world.



Generally, we don't celebrate Christmas, especially in winter. But, with the western culture spread over Chinese society, people are beginning to get to know this festival. Even my grandpa can call out the name Christmas in Chinese (“圣诞节”, which is pronounced as Shengdan Jie) correctly, which is not easy for a 90 year old man. Usually, businessmen will enlarge their shops in December, including a lot of cakes, clothes, etc. Because this is always a shopping period, businessmen love this festival.

Young people love this festival too, because they have a new reason to get together, have big dinners, dance all night, and do some romantic things with their lovers. Actually, Christmas is more like a white Valentine's Day in my hometown; the atmosphere is so peaceful and sweet. No matter if they can understand the meaning of this festival or not, or whether they are Christian, it is all right for them to enjoy this holiday. It is beautiful that they share these wonderful feelings with the people they love, isn't it?

*Ru Jiang is from China. She came here to Long Island in September 2008. She has lived here for almost six months. Life here is quiet and peaceful, quite different from the days in her hometown. Though she sometimes misses her family, she loves Long Island. She feels she is very lucky because she has the chance to experience a whole new life.*

## My Little Kan Kaung

By Sanda Lwin



When I was young, I had a lovely pet. One day, my brother saw a man who was trying to kill a little squirrel. My brother is very kind to animals and he loves them. So when he saw that poor squirrel, he paid some money to that man and took that little squirrel to our home.

That little squirrel was a male baby. We were very happy and loved him so much. At first he scared us, but when we treated him very kindly, he became familiar with us. And then he became one of our family members. We fed him milk, some fruits and seeds. He grew up very fast. He was very cute and very clever. He had big eyes and a large bushy tail. His fur was very beautiful and gray color. He was so cute when he ate food. He took his food with his paws and ate very fast. He could stand also. We called him “Kan Kaung” which means lucky baby. He played with us every day. He ran and we followed him. We were very happy at that time. He slept near our pillows every night. He didn’t want to sleep alone in his bed. He liked us to hug him.

My brother took him in his pocket when he went to tea-shop. He followed my brother silently. Sometime he walked on my brother shoulder. He was familiar with my brother’s friends. They liked him also.

And then he became an adolescent and he went outside alone. He met with his friends and played together. But he came back to home in the evening. When he came back, he would scratch at the door so we would open



*I took this picture when I saw a little squirrel that looks like our Kan Kaung*

it. He ate his dinner and went to his bed near our pillows.

He became sick when he was 4 years old. We took him to the vet and gave him medicine. But he died one week later. We were very sorry for him. We cried for a couple of days. Sometimes I miss him when I see other squirrels. I put a big smile on my face when I think about how we played together with him. Yes, he gave us a sweet memory to remember forever!

Be happy,  
Sanda

*I'm Sanda. I came to New York from Myanmar 7 months ago to accompany my husband. Now I'm an ESOL student. I'm trying to improve my*



*English and meet with new friends in my class. I appreciate my lovely teachers, Jennifer and Olga, who teach me many interesting things. Now I'm happy in my new world.*

## Happiness in America

By Elva

### Family Literacy Group

The Family Literacy classes meet twice a week at the Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library. The classes consist of 20-25 non-English speaking students, mostly mothers with young children. The children are separated and learn English along with their parents in a wonderful learn and play program directed by the library. The moms work on practical life skill situations such as making and keeping a doctor's appointment and talking to the child's teacher. The program is in its eighth successful year.

*(Mary Sanford, tutor)*



ello. My name is Elva. I am from Mexico. I came to this country in 2002. Mexico is a beautiful country, but there the life is hard. There is not a lot of work. The salaries are very low, and the basic things are a little expensive. I like living in this country because if you work hard enough, you can live better. This is the reason why I am trying to learn English. It is the language that the people speak here in America. It is necessary for better communication and helps you to have better opportunities.

Here I am very happy. Here I met the one who is now my husband. My husband is Juan. He is a good father and a good husband. He works on swimming pools. He has worked four years doing pools and he enjoys his job. His boss says he is a good worker and every year that passes he gets more experience.

We have two beautiful children named Alex and Diana. Alex was my first child. When he was born, I was very happy because I was a mother for the first time. Alex is a very loving boy and also very intelligent. He is in kindergarten. He was born on February 28. On that day he is very happy because it is his birthday. He gets presents and has a little party. But for us, his parents, it is a happy day, but also it is a day to remember and feel a little sad. On that same day in February three days after Alex was born his grandfather, my husband's father, died.

Diana is my second child. When she was born she gave me a great surprise because during my pregnancy, I was thinking that it would be a boy again. But it was not. It was a beautiful girl who made me so happy. Diana was a premature baby when she was born. She stayed in the hospital almost three weeks. I returned to my house, but she didn't come with me. Every day I went to the hospital to see her and stayed for two or three hours. These days were very sad for me, but finally one day she came back home to us. Now Diana is a healthy girl. She is intelligent and very social.



*Elva's family: Diana, Alex and Juan Vallin*

One thing that will make me very happy is when my mother will meet my family in person. She only knows them in pictures and she speaks with them on the telephone. I hope one day I can go to visit her or she can come here to visit me. That will be when one of my dreams comes true.

Elva attends a Family Literacy class at the Mastics, Moriches, Shirley Library twice a week. She is a hard working student and is making good progress.

## My Grandparents

By Maria J. Ruiz



Maria Ruiz on her Communion day with father's parents Pepa and Antonio and with her mother's parents Beatriz and Francisco

**G**randparents are a very important part of a child's life. They are the foundation for the life of the child. Those years they never forget. Those years are magic and marvelous.

When I was a child, I visited my grandparents every weekend. We ate and my brother and I played with my cousin.

My grandparents' names are Antonio, Pepa, Beatriz and Francisco. Antonio and Pepa were the parents of my father. My grandparents, Beatriz and Francisco were the parents of my mother. My grandfather, Antonio, died when I was nine years old. When I'm thinking of him, I see him telling stories and playing with my cousin and me. My grandmother, Pepa, died when I was eighteen years old. She stitched dresses and jerseys for me and my dolls.

My grandfather, Francisco, died when I was thirty-three years old. That was one of the worst moments of my life. I was on holiday and when I arrived home, it was too late. My grandfather was gone.

Before his death, my grandfather saw my oldest son, Sam. He could enjoy him because Sam was born in 1994. I went every week so that my grandparents could see Sam and enjoy their great-grandson.

My grandfather showed me respect and knew how to listen to people. He said the important thing is that the family is first. My grandfather told stories about the war and how he and my grandmother passed the time.

My grandmother, Beatriz, died when I was thirty-seven years old. That was the second worst moment of my life. My grandmother showed me how to cook, to pray and to be a good daughter.

Every day I think of my grandparents Francisco, Beatriz, Antonio and Pepa. I love my grandparents and I always have them present in my heart and in my mind.

*Maria Ruiz attends the Family Literacy class at Mastic, Moriches, Shirley Library twice a week. She is a very capable student and often helps new students in the class.*

# What is a Family?

By Oretta Pringle

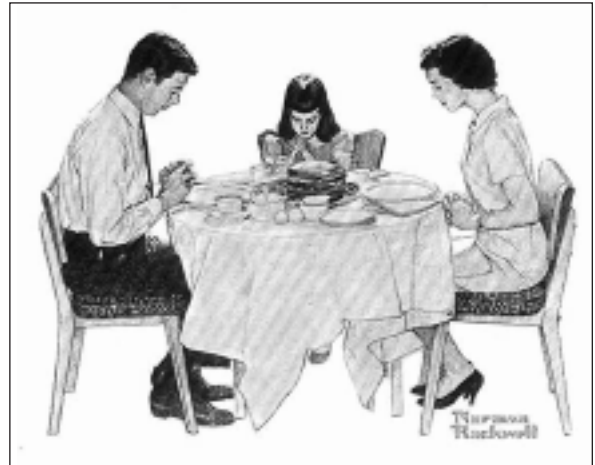
Once I saw a Norman Rockwell print of a family at dinner time. It looked like they were praying over what looked like a well-balanced meal. The family in the Norman Rockwell print looked “well-balanced” like the food on the table.

In May, I went to my home state of North Carolina. It was my mother’s 87th birthday. Unlike the family in the painting, my family and I don’t always agree on what to eat, what time or where we sit at the table.

But on this day, May 26, 2008, we came together to celebrate my mother’s birthday with family and friends. We sat down at the table and my brother said a prayer. It had been about ten years since we were all together. Now, once again, we were all together with

our mother celebrating her birthday. We looked just like the family in the Norman Rockwell print.

*“I haven’t lived in North Carolina since I was nineteen years old. I always enjoy going back to visit my family and friends. This was a special day to honor our mother and we are grateful to have her with us.”*



A print by Norman Rockwell

# Color Festival Celebration

By Rita Singh

I was visiting my friend at her house last Thursday. We arrived there at 9 o’clock at night. When we arrived there, the night was very cold, but we didn’t feel bad because we were inside the house. The next morning, we went outside all together for an outing and we had lots of fun. On Saturday morning, we celebrated our Color Festival. So we all played Color together and we put Color on each other’s faces and also we made different types of sweets and foods. Everybody enjoyed the foods and sweets. In the evening, my friend organized a community party for the children that was very good. The kids did cultural dances for the Color Festival.

When the dances were over, we ate dinner. Each family brought a different dish to share. On Sunday morning, we had breakfast at my friend’s house, and then we drove home. When I reached home, my friend sent an e-mail to me saying every year we should celebrate our Color Festival together because everybody enjoyed themselves so much.

*Rita came from India where she earned a degree in History Honors. She lives in Port Jefferson Station with her husband and three daughters. She has been working with a tutor for 2 years to improve her speech and writing skills in English.*

# Farm Life in Las Nieves

By Nidia Rios

I was born in a small place called Las Nieves. My life there was a little complicated. Since we were small, our parents taught us that we have to work to have something in our life. We worked on a farm that my parents were the owners. My father wasn't there at that time, because he wanted to give us a better life. He came to the U.S.A. and worked hard.

We had to get up early in the morning to go to take care of our animals. We didn't have any machines to milk the cows, so we had to milk around 20 cows, just me and my mom. We had to finish at least at 6 o'clock because I had to go to the high school at 7:30 am. We had to walk to our house and get ready as fast as we could because the bus picked us up at 7:00.

So we just had time to take a shower and get dressed. If we did not do it at that time, we had to walk there around half an hour to get to the school. We finished school at 1:15. Then we had to walk again to our home and get dressed to go to take care of the animals again. We finished around 5:00 pm. Then we had to make dinner, so we were free around 7:00 pm. We have very little time to study. Every day was the same routine. Taking care of a farm is not easy, since just me, my mom and my little sister are in charge of everything. We also have a small farm full with chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, pigs and other small animals. My little sister who was just 7 years old was in charge of that farm most of the time. In total we had 40 cows and bulls. The cows and bulls were separate, so I had to go with the milk and sell it to a person who made cheese from it. My mom was still taking care of the other farm. My parents and my daughter are the most special people in my life. My mom taught me many things. Thanks to her my life here is not so difficult, because she taught me how to work. My mom likes horses a lot. We had a very huge horse that was about 6 feet tall. My mom rode him all the time; she was a wonderful rider; she got on the horse with a big jump; she never used anything to get onto him.

After I graduated I started working taking care of children, and after a few years I decided to come here to work. The life here is pretty different. I really miss my country. I believe someday I'll go back there.

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"My mom taught me many things. Thanks to her my life here is not so difficult, because she taught me how to work."

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# We Won the Lottery

By Nasima Hossain

**E**ight years ago my husband and I lived in Bangladesh. Although we were well educated, we wanted more opportunity. We wanted to come to America where some of our family already lived. It wasn't easy. We had to enter a USA lottery along with thousands of other people. It took six months and many letters and paperwork before we were accepted.

We arrived in New York on June 23, 2001. It was three months before the attacks on 9/11. We were so lucky. My husband's sister and her family lived in New York, so at first we lived with them. We both got jobs as soon as we could and finally found a place of our own. In Bangladesh, people think all Americans are rich. We tell them we have to work very hard.

At first I worked in a store in Jamaica, Queens. I worked there for two years. Then I found a better job in a pharmaceutical company on Long Island. I worked at this company for five years before moving to my present job with Forest Laboratories, which is a fine company.

Even though I could speak English, I wanted to improve my speaking and writing and understanding of American culture. I applied to Literacy Suffolk for a tutor. I have been learning to use English better which helps me at work. We have also been studying American history.

I am very grateful to live in America. Three months after we arrived, we received our green cards and social security cards. Last spring, we became American citizens and recently proudly voted in our first election. America still offers great opportunity to people.

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“Last spring, we became  
American citizens and  
recently proudly voted in  
our first election.”

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# Chasing My Dream

By Julio Musun



Although I work in construction, I have always wanted a Commercial Driver's License and I had a permit.

At a tutor training session, where I was a guest, I met a woman bus driver. I mentioned that I had always wanted a CDL, and she gave me the name and address of a driver training school.



After the meeting, I immediately drove to the school to find out the cost, how many lessons I needed, and if I could set up a payment schedule. I was only able to afford three driving classes and one inspection class. My tutor, Maggie, and I worked on the inspection schedule, which one must know by heart.

After only six weeks, and spending \$1200, I decided I was ready to take the test. I am happy to say that I passed the first time.

Now, I need to find a company to hire me to drive a delivery truck!

# Memories of Lake George

By Claudia



My family and I went on vacation to Lake George, upstate New York. We went in August and we stayed in a nice small hotel near the lake. We did a lot of nice things. The first day we went to a river, and we swam in a small pond. The water was cold and refreshing. Bill, my husband, was taking pictures while Emmanuel, Kevin and I were having fun playing with the colorful flat stones.

One of the most exciting days we had was when we went rafting down the Sacandaga River. There were eight people in the raft including our guide. At first I was afraid because I thought it was going to be dangerous. A few minutes later I realized that there

was nothing to be afraid of because the river was calm. After a half an hour our guide told us that we could go swimming. The water was warm, clean and very relaxing.

I will never forget this vacation. We all would love to go back to Lake George someday.

*My name is Claudia. I'm from Jiquipilas Chiapas, Mexico. I'm 36 years old. I'm married and I have two boys. My husband's name is William and my sons are Emmanuel and Kevin. A few months ago, I met an angel. Her name is Beth. She is helping me a lot with my English. I thank her so much; she will always be in my heart.*

# My Strength and Inspiration: My Mother

By Bertha Rodriguez



any people have inspired me, but the person who inspires me the most is my mother. She is my teacher, my doctor, and my best friend. If I could describe my mother with one word, this would be strength, because she never gives up on life.

My mother's name is Francisca Bertha Merino. She is 63 years old, and she lives in Mexico. She has lived a hard life. When she was little, she didn't live with luxuries — the family didn't have television or radio, and there wasn't any electricity. Because my

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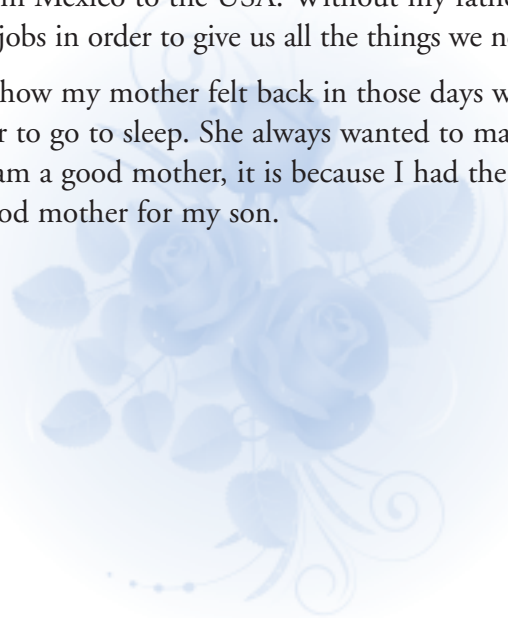
"If I am a good mother,  
it is because I had the best  
teacher ..."

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mother's house was far away from the town, she had to wake up very early everyday to get to school on time. She only had one school uniform for the week, so she had to wash it everyday. My mother remembers when her father would drink every single day and would then abuse her mother verbally and physically. When my mother went to college, she went far away because she wanted to get away from the drama and trouble at home. She graduated as an elementary school teacher when she was

18 years old. On December 24, 1981, my parents got married in a beautiful Roman Catholic Church in Puente de Ixtla, Morelos, Mexico. She was so happy on that day that she momentarily forgot that she had 5 kids to raise and a husband who was unemployed. In 1985, my father emigrated from Mexico to the USA. Without my father, life was hard for my mother; she worked two jobs in order to give us all the things we needed.

Today, I am a mother and I can imagine how my mother felt back in those days when she would be the last one to eat dinner or to go to sleep. She always wanted to make sure everything was ok with us first. If I am a good mother, it is because I had the best teacher and everyday I will try to be a good mother for my son.



# The Beauty of Autumn

By Magna Nicotri



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“My daughter likes to jump in the leaves, and my son likes to take pictures of the trees.”

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**T**he year has four seasons: winter, spring, summer and fall. Autumn is another word for fall. If you take the time to look around, you will see the colors of the trees. They are so beautiful and there are so many kinds of them. There are colorful leaves of red, yellow, brown and green.

This season is so special to enjoy. Our family takes trips this time of year to enjoy the outdoors. No matter which way you go, there are always trees around to look at.

We enjoy going out east as a family to pick apples and pumpkins and eat roasted corn.

My daughter likes to jump in the leaves, and my son likes to take pictures of the trees. We always have a great time when we make trips as a family like this.

The photo was taken by Louis Nicotri, a senior at Patchogue-Medford High School. He is taking a professional photography course at BOCES Tech in Bellport. Louis is my son and I am proud to be his mother.

*Maria would like to thank Literacy Suffolk and her teacher, Eve, for everything they have done for her.*



## I Know

By Eladio Medina

Today I called you.  
Today I did not find you.  
Tomorrow I will go looking for you again.  
Tomorrow I will not find you,  
I know.

My soul is clamoring for you.  
My heart is filled with nostalgic thoughts  
of my beloved friend.  
The loneliness,  
I know.

A glance to the crowd,  
You are not there.  
With thoughts of a thousand memories,  
You are not there.  
I know.

To the sky I cried your name.  
To the wind I cried your name.  
No answer!  
I listen silently to my broken emotions.  
Today I stay lonely,  
I know.

*Eladio Medina, originally from Peru, resides with his sister and family in Riverhead. Eladio works in maintenance, loves to read, write and learn the English language. This year Eladio took an English writing course at Suffolk County Community College to accelerate his progress. Eladio has been a faithful student in our literacy program and because of his diligence, consistently moves closer toward his goals.*

# When Dreams Come True

By Kasia Rzymyska

If someone had said a few years ago that I would go with my family to the USA, I would have said that it was not possible. Moving to the U.S. was in my very distant dreams, but I admit that, in my subconscious all the time, I wanted to see the world that I knew only from the movies. I never thought I would see so many beautiful places in the USA — I have been here with my husband and my son since 2004. When I was a girl, I heard something about Niagara Falls and the Statue of Liberty in New York, the Amish country in Pennsylvania and Disney World in Florida. Those and other different places were like a dream for me, but now I know that our dreams can come true when we really want it very much. If I compare those places that I have seen so far, I do not know which one is the most beautiful, because each of them is really different, exciting, and simply amazing.

Niagara Falls delights with the magnitude of water and, above all, the naturalness which no one can ignore. Viewing the waterfall in the brightness of the light is wonderful and the feeling of droplets of water on our skin fascinates us deeply. The next one, the Statue of Liberty, is also very nice. I think that New York without the Statue of Liberty would not be the same as it is now. This huge monument is admired by all visitors who come to NYC. The Amish country in Pennsylvania that I saw fascinated me because I did not know that people can live without electricity in this age. Their lifestyle and rules are different from ours, so everybody is interested in them. One of the most amazing and magical places that everybody loves is Disney World in Florida. Many people think that place is just for kids, but it is not true, because everybody who has been there can say that Disney World is for all ages and everyone feels like a child there and the impression remains for many years.

I have written just a very short description of some places that I saw last year, but you have to see them by themselves because they are worth seeing. The year 2008 is ending, but what is going to happen in the New Year 2009, nobody knows. I see now, that new dreams do not stop at what I have seen so far. This year I would like to go to California and visit San Francisco, Los Angeles, Hollywood, and above all, to see beautiful landscapes filled with national parks and the Grand Canyon. But what will be, time will tell. Maybe I will have the opportunity to share with you my experiences in the next edition of the magazine “Reading for Life”.

*Kasia is from Poland. She is married and has an eight year old son, Jakub. This is her third submission to Reading For Life. She thanks her teacher and friend, her tutor, Sheila Sussman, for her patience, perseverance and concern.*

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“I do not know which one is the most beautiful, because each of them is really different, exciting, and simply amazing.”

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# Vocation for Service

By Dennys Vinas

I come from the Dominican Republic. In my country, I worked as a volunteer at the fire station for ten years. I helped people who were sick or who were in accidents. I drove them to the hospital. If the doctor decided the patient had to move, I drove them to a hospital in another city. I was trained in many emergency areas, but my specialty was working in the ambulance. I did artificial respiration, bandaged injuries and immobilized broken bones and used tourniquets.

When I was pregnant I stopped working. When my son Angel was one year old, I came to the USA with my husband. I miss my family very much and wish they were here with me.

*Dennys studied English in college. She hoped to work for the tourist trade. She never thought she'd live in the United States. She is adapting very well.*

# Life Story

By Ignazio Maltese

My name is Ignazio. I was born in Italy in a city named Trapani on August 13, 1933. When I was eighteen, I went into the navy. After two years I finished the service and I came to the United States. I became a citizen on May 15, 1963.

I went back to Italy to see my parents. At that time, I met my wife, Antonietta, and we got engaged. I returned to the United States and, after two years, we got married. We came to the United States together.

After one year my wife had a baby boy named Mario. After two years we moved to Long Island. Then my wife had a baby girl named

Nina and four years later she had another baby boy named Tony.

At age 62 I retired, and now, at 74, I have decided to learn the computer and to learn English and improve my handwriting. Thank you, Diana, for helping me with my English and my handwriting.

*Note from the tutor: Ignazio and I got together to learn the cursive alphabet and, after he mastered penmanship, we worked on a bit of reading skills. He is now enrolled in a computer class at the library and continues reading and writing English to become more skillful.*

# Celebrating Birthdays as We Celebrate in Ecuador

By Nidia Rios

**N**y name is Nidia and I am from Ecuador. I have been living here for seven years, since 2001. I then started to live a different kind of life with different traditions and culture. When I got here, I didn't know any words in English. Then my family told me that I have to learn the language and get used to this country. It was very difficult but, day by day, I have learned a lot.

My life has changed since I had my daughter. Her name is Elizabeth. My daughter is only four years old but every birthday party that she has, she enjoys it a lot. We've been celebrating as we celebrated in our country, which is very different from here. We invite a family and every member of that family is allowed to come. We make a lot of food.

Usually the party starts late in the day, around 4 pm or later, and it ends whenever the people want to go. We never put a time that the party ends. We believe if we put the time to end, the people are going to feel uncomfortable. The party is not only for the children, everybody is welcome. We start with snacks then we play a lot of games like the dance of the chair. The father and mother have to participate in other kinds of games, too. The winner gets a present. We have every child participate in a big dance and whoever dances best is the winner.

After snacks we give everybody the big meal, usually something that we made in our home country. After that come the cake and then

the piñata. We put all kinds of candies and toys inside the piñata. At the end of that we start the dance. Everybody dances until their hearts are contented.

Usually the party ends in the middle of the night or later. That depends on what day the party is, which is why we usually make it on Saturday no matter what day the birthday is.

*"I was born on July 10, 1981. I grew up in a small town called The Nieves. I'd lived there for 20 years. I went to the school and high school in the same town that I grew up in. I enjoy playing soccer a lot, and volleyball. I have played in many places in Ecuador. It was a very good team and we were the best known in our town. Since I came here, I am dedicated to learning other things. I started with the language and I want to learn many other things. My hobby is listening to music and writing small stories about something that happened with my family."*



Nidia Rios and her daughter Nidia Bravo

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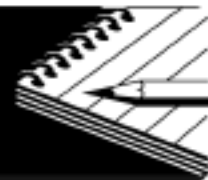
### MISSION STATEMENT

Literacy Suffolk, Inc., effects countywide change by improving individual adult literacy skills through the valuable use of trained volunteers and by expanding community awareness.

### VISION STATEMENT

We believe that the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively is critical to personal freedom and the maintenance of a democratic society.

# Guidelines to writing for *Reading for Life*



## *Steps for Writing:*

### • **Select a Topic**

Choose something interesting or exciting to write about. Some people prefer to write poems, letters, or recipes (especially from your native country) instead of stories. **Select a "lead-in" sentence** to get you started.

### • **Select an Original and Inviting Title**

Avoid titles starting with "My," "I," "Our," and "A."  
***A gripping title invites the reader to continue.***  
(Note: Story titles may be altered at the editor's discretion.)

**Examples:** Instead of "Our First Day in the USA" try "**Halfway Around the World**," rather than "My New Life" use "**Cultural Adventure**," and "I Like Baseball" could become "**Big Game at Shea**."

### • **Add a Short Bio about the Author**

However, if the story already contains personal information, **do not repeat** the same things in the bio—supply new information or omit the bio altogether.

### • **Include Quality Photos or Artwork** (optional)

- ✓ Submit only good quality, high resolution photos! Original artwork should identify the artist.
- ✓ Label photos and artwork with the author's name and story title. Identify and describe photo content for caption. (i.e. *John and Mary at Disneyland in 2002*)

## *Important Steps before Submission:*

### • **Control the Length!**

Stories should not exceed **500 words in length (about one typewritten page)**. Stories exceeding 500 words may be shortened or rejected at the editor's discretion.

### • **Edit and Revise**

Incorporate all editorial changes into the final version prior to submission for publication.

### • **Use a Computer (or Typewriter)**

Submitted pieces should be typewritten on a computer or typewriter. (Handwriting is not always legible.)

### • **Complete Submission Form(s)**

Complete all the information requested. *Never* submit students' writing without their knowledge and consent.

### • **Multiple Submissions**

If submitting more than one story, indicate the preferred selection for publication. Additional stories may not be printed.

• **Submit the Writing** by mail, Email, interlibrary mail, or FAX to 286-1668. (Email **only as a Microsoft Word attachment** to [admin@literacysuffolk.org](mailto:admin@literacysuffolk.org). In the "Subject" area write "Reading for Life Submission.")



## *Suggestions for Tutors:*

- 1.) Use past issues of "Reading for Life" to encourage your student(s) to express themselves in writing.
- 2.) Refer to "**LITSTART**," Writing Strategy #60 (page 189) for tips to help you teach writing to your learner.
- 3.) The following Web sites may assist in the writing process:

- **Verizon Literacy Network:** "Writing Without Fear" [www.literacynetwork.verizon.org/Free-Online-Courses.21.0.html](http://www.literacynetwork.verizon.org/Free-Online-Courses.21.0.html)
- **OWL:** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/writinglab/>
- **About ESL:** <http://esl.about.com>

### 4.) **Contact regional staff for help:**

Huntington Sta. (HUNT)	547-6731
Amityville (AMTY)	264-0567 x17
Middle Country (MIDC)	585-9393 x267
Mastics/Shirley (MMSH)	399-1511 x215
Riverhead (RIVR)	727-3228 x126
Stony Brook (SBALC)	444-5272
Brookhaven Lab (BNL)	344-4894

### 5.) Tips for assisting learners to write for *RFL*:

- ✓ Use action words (verbs).
- ✓ Use descriptive language (adjectives).
- ✓ Vary sentence length.
- ✓ Edit for punctuation, spelling, length, and (sparingly) grammar.

# "READING FOR LIFE" SUBMISSION FORM

(A submission form *must* accompany each submission.)

**AUTHOR INFORMATION** (Provide all requested information. Submit a **separate** form for each learner and each writing. Do *not* include multiple authors on a single form.)

Story Title \_\_\_\_\_ Submission Date \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Name \_\_\_\_\_ *(as it will appear in the publication byline)*

Author's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ *(if different from above)*

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Town and Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Eve) \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ *(if applicable)*

Country of Origin \_\_\_\_\_ Native Language \_\_\_\_\_

Program: ESOL \_\_\_\_\_ Basic Literacy \_\_\_\_\_

Biography Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Photo/Illustration Enclosed (optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Items will not be returned. Photos should be labeled)*



**Consent to Publish:**

I give full consent to have my writing published in "Reading for Life." *(Author's initials)* \_\_\_\_\_

-----

## TUTOR INFORMATION

Tutor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Town/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Eve) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Regional AMTY \_\_\_\_\_ HUNT \_\_\_\_\_ MIDC \_\_\_\_\_ MMSH \_\_\_\_\_ RIVR \_\_\_\_\_ SBALC \_\_\_\_\_ BNL \_\_\_\_\_  
Locations



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**Send items to: LITERACY SUFFOLK, INC.**

Attn: Reading for Life

P. O. Box 9000, Bellport, NY 11713-9000

*Additional forms available on our website:*

**[www.LiteracySuffolk.org/publications\\_publicity.cfm](http://www.LiteracySuffolk.org/publications_publicity.cfm)**





# Literacy SUFFOLK

*an accredited ProLiteracy affiliate*

627 N. Sunrise Service Road  
PO Box 9000  
Bellport, NY 11713

Phone: (631) 286-1649  
Fax: (631) 286-1668

E-Mail:  
[admin@literacysuffolk.org](mailto:admin@literacysuffolk.org)

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