

The Lamplighter too

A newsletter by and for the students of the
Literacy Council of Bonita Springs

April, May, June, 2006

Published quarterly

To My Tutor

Dear Ingrid,
Thank you for all of your time
Than you have dedicated for me.
It was difficult my first year
Living in the United States.
I encountered the biggest surprise of my life.

I felt I lost one year of my life,
My voice, my mouth, closed, my hopes
And my American dream finished.
I decided to return to Honduras
Ready for a divorce. . .my life has changed!
One call to the Literacy Council was my
First step, then I met you, who is the
Person God sent to help me move my lips.
Soon I was able to communicate more
Clearly. You have helped to move the hands of time.
Today I'm optimistic and prepared
To learn to speak English.

Thank you. Happy Easter.
Martha Seelig, March 10, 2006
Ingrid Clauson, tutor

It's Party Time!

Katie Verna is leaving the Literacy Council by September 15. In honor of Katie, the Student Council and the Tutors are planning a farewell party which will be held on Sunday, September 10, 2006. The Party will be at the Bonita Community Hall on Old 41 Road from 4 pm – 8 pm.

The Student Council is working to raise money for the party and they will start to do raffle in July. They will have for the raffle many items: 1 DVD player, 1 Stereo vertical CD, micro system, 1 basket with ladies' items and more. Also they will sell T-shirts with the Literacy Council Logo.



Student Stories

Hi. My name is Ray Simon. I'm from Mexico. I came to this beautiful country for different reasons, but my first problem was the language. That's why I decided to study English. I have studied English for one year at the Literacy Council; it is the best solution for my problem.

Also I'm learning English at my job. My boss speaks to me only in English; all the instructions are in English. He asks me if I understand. Before I learned English of course my answer was no. My boss can give me instructions over the phone and I understand everything.

Before, I always needed help when I went shopping. Now, thanks to the Literacy Council, I can shop by myself. I'm very happy with the program, the excellent teachers, good schoolmates, and it is a pleasant place to study. Thanks to everybody!

English is essential without a doubt; it's the road to follow.

I invite all the students to continue to study and to wrestle with your dreams. And if you want, you can, too. Everything is possible with effort and dedication. Thanks. Ray Simon; Don Miller & Bob Sorenson, tutors

My name is Georgina Prieto. I came to the United States five years ago with my family, looking for a better future and more opportunities, but first we had to learn English and that is when we found the Literacy Council. They helped us a lot. They gave us the opportunity to learn English with them, and now I'm very grateful because, thanks to all these people who work there, my family and I have a better job. Actually, my sister and I both work for a bank and also I'm in college making my dream come true; that is becoming a physical therapist.

That is why I encourage you to make your dreams come true, but first you have to learn English.

Georgina Prieto, former student; Lisa Behm, former tutor

OFFICE STAFF & SCHEDULE

Susan Acuña, Executive Director
Katie Verna, Program Director
Gerty Reiterer Crespo, Office Manager
Monday to Friday: 9:00 to 5:00 pm
Jeanne Sachs, Student/Tutor Coordinator
Nora Martinez, Assistant Coordinator
Monday to Friday: 5:00 to 9:00 pm

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STUDENT COMPUTER LAB

Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm

The stories on this page were published in *My Journey* by the Florida Literacy Coalition and includes stories from learners throughout Florida. Each writer was given a copy of *My Journey*. A copy of the book is in the Resource Center.

THE POWER OF LOVE

Few people have had the fortune that my brother and my sisters and me have had to have parents like ours.

When we were just children, my parents died in a terrible accident. My mother's parents Pedro and Eugenia at that moment were enjoying their retirement. They had a family with two daughters very well married and six grandchildren.

Everything was perfect for them. They were happy to know they had done a good work as parents.

Suddenly that world change totally. When they woke up to that nightmare, they saw themselves starting again with four children, who didn't even go to the school yet. From that moment, they weren't our grandparents any more: they were our Mom and Dad.

I don't remember how hard was it for them, but I remember I was a very happy child, the same as my sisters Silvia and Mercedes and my brother Marcos.

We grew up beside extraordinary persons, who taught us that we can not surrender in front of adversity. They taught us a high sense of moral.

There are things that mark my life very much, some words of my mother when she said "Don't make danger to others but don't let others make danger to you" "He who perseveres wins" "Responsibility in your work and everything you do is the way to the success".

I would have to write a book with the knowledge my mother transmitted to us.

I remember the last time I saw my father. We were at the airport. I would travel to the United States. He called me to one side and told me, "Daughter, get a job for me in the United States; I want to know that country". He was an old man.

Now I understand that nothing was impossible for them. They made a second family with children to whom they never felt that they were not their biological parents.

We are married now. We are a strong family. We are not perfect, but I know from my parents that love is more powerful than tragedy.

Thanks to Katie Verna to giving me the opportunity to write these words to say a little of a lot that I can tell of my parents. Now that I work at Literacy Council, I have the opportunity to transmit what my parents taught to me to other persons.

I have had a wonderful experience with this organization, and I can see how persons are afraid when they can not communicate in English, but with constancy and discipline they learn to do it. Life changes for them and their family.

Everything is possible when you wish it and you do it with love and the conviction that you will get it.

Kerty Reiterer-Crespo

tutors: Pat Geiser, Islay Hedger, and Bob Sorenson

The Mitch "Mudslide"

October, 1998 was a very bad time, because I had never seen something like the Mitch mudslide. I used to live in the capital of my country, Nicaragua. That day I got up at 8 am. Because it was raining and I looked out the window and the sun hadn't risen yet, I thought, "It's early; I will keep sleeping," but I felt a little scared because the rain never stopped.

That day I had to work like any another day, but I was late. When finally I was ready to go to work, it was hard to get a taxi because of the weather. When I was waiting for the taxi I saw a lot of people like me waiting for a taxi. I really didn't know what was happening.

In the south of my country in Chinandega, three hours by car from the capital, the situation was terrible because of the heavy rainfall; a little town named Casitas suffered the worst. Since the hill covered the whole town, many people died covered under the landslide. I knew everything that happened because of the news, but my father was nearest because he had a house close to the disaster. My father's house was flooded and he told me that he had to help the people under the landslide. He helped to find a lot of dead bodies. He said that whole families died.

The survivors couldn't believe that tragedy. My father told me that it was the most terrible thing that he had seen in his life.

Mitch was the worst disaster that ever hit my country; many lost their families.

The whole town disappeared in a flash.

Rosa Ruiz

My First Steps

When I arrived in the USA, I couldn't speak English. I didn't know about the Literacy Council. I had been living in Bonita Springs for five years and I spent many years doing nothing. One day my friend told me about the program and I came to fill the application. The next week I got my tutor, Mr. Don Miller, so I have been studying English for one year and I feel more confident because I speak, write and read; all that I can say is thanks to the Literacy Council of Bonita Springs.

Damian Cruz

Tutor, Don Miller

My First Year

I have been living in Bonita Springs for one year. I like Bonita Springs and the people that I know here. I work in landscaping and I have been saving money so someday I can go back to Mexico.

I would like to stay for six years and open my own business, and keep studying to become a doctor. I like studying in the Literacy Council because sometimes it is fun and I forget about the work. I miss my family and I can't wait to someday see them.

Thanks to the people who work in the Literacy Council.

David Rodriguez

Bob Sorenson, tutor