

LVCC Reader

Literary Edition

Winter 2004-05

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7/1/2004 to 6/30/2005

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In an effort to try something a little more festive for this season's newsletter, we've decided to dedicate this issue of the LVCC Reader to the writings of our tutors and learners. If you have a story or other work that you'd like to be included in our next issue, please feel free to submit it to the LVCC office. Enjoy!

A Poem of Appreciation

*Once in a while, special people come along,
To help our community to make it strong.*

*That's what you did, and that's why you're great.
Your help, work and love are what we appreciate.*

*You've opened doors and given learners the key,
To grow and reach goals through literacy.*

*You've taught how to use the phone, read menus and write lists,
So we've invited you here today to tell you this:*

*We're so thankful for you; we've got nothing but cheers,
For our **AMAZING** and **WONDERFUL** Literacy Volunteers!*

*Written by Annette Sutfin
In appreciation of ALL of you!*



Upcoming Changes to the LVCC Reader

Beginning in the next newsletter, LVCC will be featuring more tutoring tips and trends. This section of the LVCC Reader will include information that we receive from you, useful resources and activities you can do with your learner. Please send in anything you'd like to share, and we'd be happy to publish your work.

*There are as many
approaches to
education as there are
teachers.*

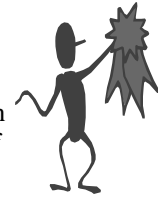
Read Aloud Contest Results

Remember the Read Aloud contest that LVCC put on with Roof Dancers last summer? We are very proud to announce that Ivan Valenzuela, son of learner, Faustino Valenzuela received second place for his entry in this summer's Read Aloud contest. Roof Dancers gave him a check for \$150 in recognition of his excellent work.

Faustino Valenzuela is an LVCC student. Educated in Mexico, his goals are to perfect his English speaking and writing skills. "The Prize" is his note of thanks for the Read Aloud Contest.

The Prize

Sincere thanks to LVCC and Roof Dancers for sponsoring the Read Aloud Contest. Our son, Ivan, 13 years old, entered. He won a big check. The family won the pleasure of hearing him read and looked forward each day for the next story.



-Faustino Valenzuela

The following is a story written by Annette Sutfin about one of LVCC's learners. She will be trying to get it professionally published in the upcoming months. Presently though, you, the LVCC tutors, will be the first to read it.

A Rainbow in the Clouds

Her name means "rainbow." When a storm breaks, when the clouds clear, the rainbow promises its end. Hong arrived in June, during the monsoon season of 2002, but it was not until ten months later that she decided it was time to let her true colors begin to illuminate the darkness.

A native of China, Hong was unsure if the adult education program could teach her, but she wanted to learn. In her first interview at Literacy Volunteers, she admitted to needing to learn English "for everything, to survive and succeed," her son said on her behalf. Whether she knew that learning to communicate in English would be such a long and taxing task or not, she did know that her mind had been clouded in the dreariness of the language barrier long enough. She was ready.

Throughout her life, she realized that knowledge was of utmost importance. After graduating from high school in 1979, she fell sick to an anonymous disease, one that would plague her for almost a decade. Despite her illness, she entered college two years later to study to be a doctor. She would eventually become a hematologist to learn about and combat blood-related diseases like the one that afflicted her.

"I choose hematologist because I am ill . . . about my blood. So I, I learn more about this, but still never know why." For a moment she dwelled on the thought, a little disappointed. Then her face lit up again. "But after I born my son, the disease is better."

Hong persisted with her studies through five years at Nanjing Medical University and received her degree in 1986. She was a general physician until the birth of her son in 1989 and then studied hematology exclusively until her family moved to Japan in 2000.

In Japan, Hong continued educating herself as she learned to speak Japanese, but two years later she would embark on a more difficult journey far from home to the United States to further her husband and her son's educations.

"My husband come to, a came to America and a, came to NAU to do ser . . . search," with her finger, she traced the letters on her hand to make sure she got it right, "to do research. He's a researcher in bioorganic chemistry," she said, nodding.

For 10 months after coming to the U.S., Hong stayed home helping her son and her husband around the house. Speaking little English, she was uncomfortable to go out in public. She met some Chinese friends, who helped her read the Bible occasionally but was otherwise clouded in the grayness of

communication deficiency.

Then she resolved to do something about it.

So she and her son made the two-mile trek to the literacy office on April 17, 2003. She tested at the lowest speaking level. Two months later, she was paired with a tutor, and slowly the clouds began to disintegrate. Since June of 2003, the pair has met weekly; Hong has attended several English conversation classes and studied, and studied.

She attends each lesson or class equipped with her electronic pocket Chinese-English dictionary, a notebook full of notes, questions and other English mysteries she has gathered through the week, and a one and a half inch stack of 4 by 6 inch index cards which list English vocabulary words, their Chinese counterparts and her own made-up pronunciation key.

Hong is obviously no stranger to working for what she wants, but that is not to say that she doesn't get discouraged from time to time. Though she likes living in America, she sometimes longs for the security of her home.

"I think the important thing is that my English is not that good," she said humbly. "A lot is that I feel not so comfortable. This is important, if my English is getting better, I can say something more clear, I feel this is good . . . English is a big problem for me, so maybe we'll stay here just until my son graduates high school. Maybe China is more good for us."

Despite her occasional lack of self-confidence in her language proficiency, Hong has come a long way since her first visit to the Literacy Volunteers. When she returned to the organization's office in May of 2004 to be retested, her speaking skills had improved almost six grade levels, and she was now reading nearly at the high school level. This semester, she is enrolled in several classes at NAU's Program of Intensive English. She is determined to live up to her name and shed some light and color in the darkness and the ignorance that she feels obscure her.

In that sense, Hong is, as her name suggests, a beacon of happiness, color and light that shines through a melancholy grayness. Not every storm has a rainbow. They are uncommon because light must reflect on the clouds in such a way that separates the colors as they wrap around the sky. According to legend, at the end of every rainbow is a pot of gold. The name Hong means "rainbow," but that is not what makes her so special. Rather, it is her resolve to be the beam of colors despite the storm. It is her promise to find her pot of gold.



Why I Am a Literacy Tutor By: Patty Gibbs

When I was in the third grade, my mom told me about a newspaper article. She'd read about a Chinese family who had just immigrated to Florida. She said they couldn't speak or read English. Soon after arriving in Florida, the entire family went to the grocery store. Not wanting to ask for help, they shopped by looking at the pictures on the boxes and cans. They bought a large container with a picture of nicely browned, fried chicken on the front. When they opened it at home, they found white, greasy stuff. They'd purchased a can of Crisco.

My little-girl heart was devastated. I pictured the excited family: hungry kids jumping up and down, the dad hoping for a nice meal and the mother getting out the skillet to warm the chicken. I heard the rumble of their empty tummies. Instead of the expected wholesome, fried chicken dinner, they got grease. I tasted their disappointment and frustration. I remember saying to my mom that I would have helped them read the labels. For years after, when grocery shopping with my mom, I tuned in my ear for foreign language spoken by shoppers. I swore that I would not let unsuspecting families make the same mistake. I had to help.

And now I can.

As a literacy volunteer, I can do better than just read for someone. I can teach them to read, which in turn, allows them to be independent members of our society.

At the LVCC orientation meeting, we were asked to think about the people who cannot fill out necessary forms at doctors' or employment offices, figure out bus schedules, make phone calls or go to the grocery stores.

I immediately thought about the Floridian Chinese family and whispered to my husband, "Sign me up!"

Volunteering is like walking through the grocery store and listening for a different language. Only this time, I can really help.

“My Land—Mexico” By: Faustino Valenzuela

My land smells of the sea,
of desert and mountains.

My land is golden beaches, volcanoes in eruption, cactus
and cempasuchis* flowers.

My land is flat ground and forests green as hope. Fertile land
where man is born and women of untamable valor.
(sometimes too with them is discord).

My land smells of jungle, of rivers and good people.

My land has the smell of grace, peace and illusions that keep hope living.

My land is like the Phoenix fowl that rises up from the spoiled dust
and voracious and covet natures of the insatiable and rapacious conqueror.

My land is Mestizos blood, naturals and creoles.

My land is nice people, hospitable and competent, a mosaic of cultures and
color.

It has the heritage of Cuahutemoc's* bravery and Hidalgo's* courage.



* cempasuchis: Mexico's national flower

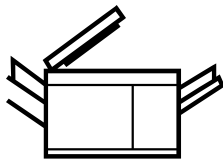
*Cuahutemoc: The last Emperor of Mexico

* Hidalgo: Priest who fought for the Mexican Independence



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*LVCC needs a new copy machine!
If anyone has one that they'd be
willing to donate, please contact us!*



*Changing lives
through literacy*

Dearest tutors,

My time here at LVCC has quickly come to an end. My, how time flies when you're having fun! So, I'll be graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Journalism and moving on to other things back home in Chicago. I don't have specific plans as of yet, but I've been thinking about joining the PeaceCorps within the next year or so. My job at LVCC has truly been the best work experience of my life, especially because of all the wonderful people that I've gotten to meet (that means you!).

I'm so thankful for my time here; it has been a very positive learning experience. I will miss all of the phone calls, email correspondence and events that we've shared together. Thanks to each and every one of you for making my time at LVCC worthwhile and inspirational. Volunteering is sure to be a major part of my future, because I've seen what hard work and dedication can yield. Wherever my life takes me, thoughts of you will always come along.

Thank you and best regards,

Annette Sutfin

