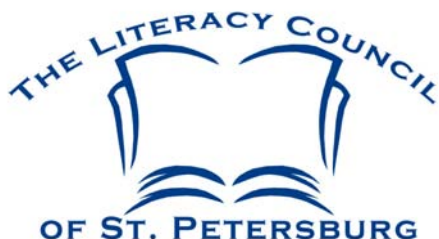


“In Our Own Words”

Written by students of



CELEBRATING OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY

1968 – 2008

The Literacy Council of St. Petersburg

a member of ProLiteracy America

Celebrates 40 Years!!

1968 - 2008

The Literacy Council of St. Petersburg is made up of volunteers who all have the same purpose in mind—to teach an adult to read. We provide one-to-one tutoring for adults who need to improve their reading skills at no charge.

The method we use is the “Laubach Way to Reading”, a world renowned method that for over 80 years has been proven to be very successful in teaching adults to read for the first time. Many other literacy councils across the United States also use the “Laubach Way to Reading”.

This book contains the writings of many of our current students. They worked very hard to bring you their story. For some of our students, this is their first writing effort. We know you will enjoy their story as much as we did while putting this book into print.

We want to thank the tutors who worked equally as hard as their students in helping them to express their thoughts.

Most importantly, a heartfelt THANK YOU to EVERY STUDENT IN OUR PROGRAM-- without you we could not be successful.

WE ARE VERY PROUD OF YOU!



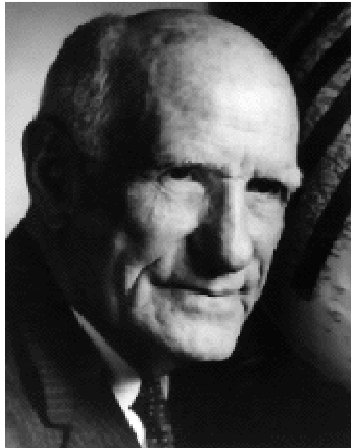
Many knew him as the 'Apostle to the Illiterates'

Lowell Thomas called him "the foremost teacher of our times."

The tribes of the Belgian Congo called him Okombekombe, which means "mender of old baskets," because he taught adults to read and write.

The Literacy Council of St. Petersburg

**dedicates
this book
of student writings
to
Dr. Frank Laubach
1884-1970**

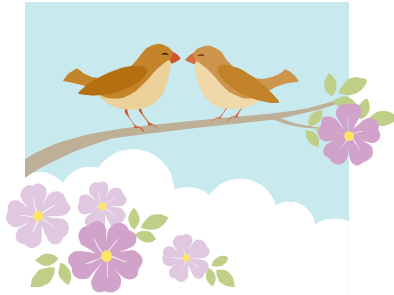


whose dedication to mankind and pioneering methods in adult literacy have enabled over 100 million people to learn to read and become meaningful participants in society.

We are forever in his debt.

Beautiful Mornings

by Mai Adams



Normally, I wasn't free in the mornings. I would prepare to go to work and later I would go to school. Recently, I lost my job and I've been going to school late because I wanted to enjoy the beautiful mornings.

I have three or four things that I enjoy in my back yard in the morning between 7a.m. to 9a.m. I study my GED vocabulary and exercise at the same time. I enjoy listening to the natural music. The music from the ocean waves hitting the sea walls, the wind hitting the sailboat's masts in the canal, and the birds singing in the trees all bring joy to me! These are wonderful mornings, the best I've have had for a long time.

Many birds have different voices, and their voices are beautiful. The seagulls' voices are not as nice as the land birds' voices, I feel. The smallest birds' voices are sweeter than the larger birds' voices. Even the music from the banana trees is different from the music from the big pine trees. What do you think?

There are a lot of activities I can enjoy in my back yard. I can swing lying in the hammock, I can swim in the pool, I can paddle my kayak, and I can use the exercise equipment. But I have to take care of the back yard, too. If I don't it

looks bad; it doesn't look clean. It's very bad looking now! I haven't taken care of it for at least a month.

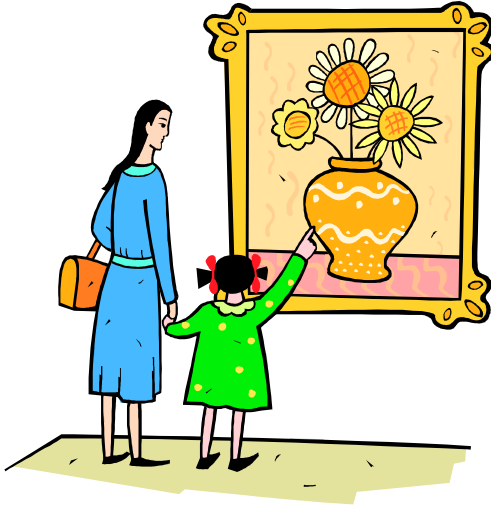
I hope and wish that I would have enough money to live on. Then I'll continue to go to school and enjoy beautiful mornings in my back yard. I would have time to take care of it. I'm going to pray to God to give me my wish, and I'll also buy some lotto tickets.

When I finish my GED, I'll invite all my teachers and my classmates to my house. I'll give a party in my back yard. That's my inspiration! I've never had a party at my house since I moved there in 1997. I'm very afraid of the GED test; by the time I pass it, I may be very, very, very old!



This is My Story

by Cynthia Alston



Hello. My name is Cynthia Alston. I would like to tell you a little bit about me.

I have lived in New York City, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Charlotte, North Carolina, and St. Petersburg, Florida. I have four beautiful children, Maurice 19, Trevor 18, Cineal 15, and Nequae 10. I have a wonderful husband who's name is Maurice. I also have four sisters (not including myself) and four brothers, one of which resides in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

I went to school in Brooklyn, New York. I did not graduate from high school because of a pregnancy. I was young, but over 18. Even back then I realized I had a problem with my reading. I was not able to get back in school due to me trying to raise a family.

Years later in my adult life I felt I needed to get back in school, and at least improve my reading, and maybe even earn my G. E. D. I was introduced to Tomlinson Adult Learning Center where I began literacy classes. I have a wonderful instructor by the name of Ms. Mary Putnam. I also have a great tutor whose name is Ms. Ann Palmer. I am grateful to have them both in my life. They helped me so much.

I also was introduced to someone in class, who helped me to improve my life, and her name is Beulah Hill, but I call her Cookie. She is not only a good friend, she is my sister in Christ Jesus. She is so much fun to be around. Outside of the classroom I volunteer at the Salvador Dali Museum where I am a greeter. I have learned so much about the surrealist Salvador Dali. When I am not in class or at the museum other things I enjoy are fishing, swimming, and just being outdoors. I also enjoy working with children.

I consider myself as being humble, and easy going. My ultimate goals are to earn my G.E.D., reunite with my children, and strengthen my faith in Christ Jesus to become a better Christian.



What Was It That Opened the Big Door?

by Patrick Anderson



I am 32 years old and have graduated from high school. Would you believe without being able to read? The teachers sent me to PTEC for "Special Education" however reading wasn't part of it. I'm ok with math. It was a struggle going to school, but I was present, and on time every day, which was probably why I received a high school diploma. It's ok because I won't have to get a GED.

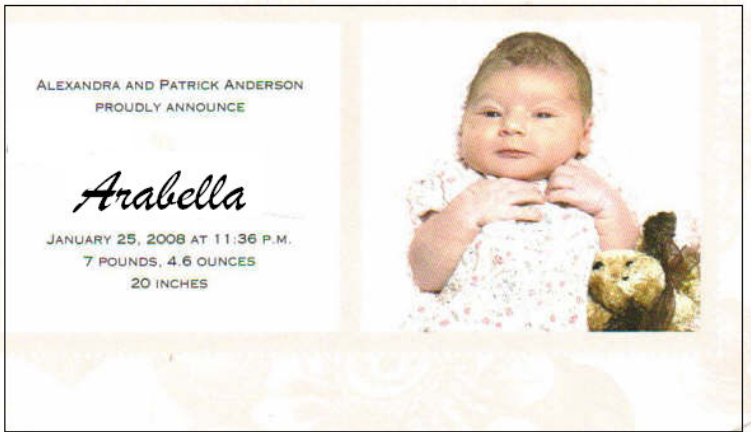
It was difficult getting a regular drivers license, (C.D.L) Commercial Drivers License, 18 Wheelers, and recently a Divers license for my new job, pressure cleaning large ship's hulls.

Driving 18 Wheelers was a trip without being able to read! I memorized the most important road signs for the Florida license, but when It came to finding an address it was weird. I would have to match up the signs to the bill of lading. Central- the C would have to match, etc.

Some time ago I saw a WalMart ad on TV asking that if anyone wanted to learn to read they could call a number. I kept it for quite awhile. I finally called last September and began my lessons at Lakewood Community School with Barbara Taylor. There were reasons why reading was always on my mind. The first was I wanted to get a better

job, that wasn't so hard- moving company, and the ability to make more money for my wife, and new daughter. The second was to be able to help my new daughter with her homework.

My wife Alexandra has been an inspiration by encouraging me. She helps me study my spelling, and when the baby cries in the middle of the night she lets me sleep while she attends to Kathleen. The KEY that opened the big door was finding the Literacy Council of St. Petersburg. Without the volunteers, and the organization I would never have been able to afford a tutor.



How I Lost and Found My Car

by Barbara Ashworth



I parked my car in the Pinellas Park Mall parking lot on a hot summer day and went inside to shop. I shopped from one end of the mall to the other.

When I was ready to leave, I went out the nearest door and could not find my car. I looked up one row and down the other for about an hour.

I then saw a security guard driving around the parking lot and flagged him down. I told him that I could not find my car. I got in the cart and we drove around looking for my car. We finally found it in the back of the mall. I realized that I had gone out the wrong door and was totally confused.

After that happened, I now notice where I park my car before I go into a mall or store to shop.

My Life

by *Linda Barrett*



My name is Linda Barrett. I'm a mother of one and a grandmother of one, her name is Mary. I would like to see her sometimes. I have lived in Pinellas Park all my life, my son and his wife live in Ohio.

I have a wonderful friend named Barbara. When we go shopping she writes checks for me to sign. Barbara and her husband George take me to church on Sundays.

My mom took me to the eye glass place. My friend Anna came over to my house by bus. Lunchtime I made spaghetti. My mom took us to the eye glass place and after we took Anna home.

Yesterday my mom and I sent money to my son. I asked the lady if I could see how she sent money, she said "no."

My Struggle with Reading

by Beulah Bewey



At first, I blamed my mother and father for my dyslexia. Dyslexia means a person who struggles with reading. I never understood why I couldn't read. My intelligence fooled everyone, even my parents. My parents sent me to school and my teachers kept passing me.

When I became an adult, I went back to school but I was not serious. I learned that you must be serious if you have a problem with reading. You need to listen and stop fooling yourself! Focus! Keep your mind on what you need to learn and not what other people think.

Looking back I knew I had to change the way I think. I had to focus and now I am learning to read.

A Life of Blessings

by Benjamin Boykins



I was born to my parents, Robert and Bessie Boykins, on December 16, 1932. We lived in Clayton, Alabama, and I was the youngest of their 10 children; five boys and five girls. My father was a farmer and my brothers and I would help my father work in the fields. I attended grammar school from first to the sixth grade. I stopped attending school so I could help my father in the fields. As I grew older, the opportunities in Alabama became unacceptable. In 1954, I left Alabama with my future wife Minnie to begin a new life in Florida. We were twenty-two years old when we left home and we wanted to start a family. In Alabama, the work was backbreaking and the pay was not enough. I could work in the fields in Alabama and only make 2 or 3 dollars a day. When I came to Florida, minimum wage was 75 cents an hour.

My wife and I first went to Bradenton and I began work on the pipeline in May of 1955. I left the pipeline later that year and moved to St. Petersburg where my wife and I would settle and raise our family. Here in St. Petersburg my wife and I had six children. My first job in St. Petersburg was with

the city's sanitation department. In 1956 I went to work for the Pinellas Lumber Company and I stayed there until 1957. The sixties were a busy time in my life. I did private janitorial work during that time. I became an ordained preacher in 1964 at the church that I attended when I came to St. Petersburg: Triumph the Church and Kingdom of God in Christ. Most importantly, I raised my six children, and was content as a family man.

The seventies were a decade of great tragedy and hope for my family. In 1971 I left Triumph the Church and Kingdom of God in Christ. I went to work for General Material in 1971 and worked there until I retired in 1992. In February of 1974 I lost my beloved wife Minnie to cancer; she was forty-two years old. At forty-two I was a single parent of five daughters and one son. My first grandchild was born in 1974 followed by four more grandchildren born later in the decade. In 1977 I married the current love of my life, Dorilyn Boykins, and we have been married thirty-one years. The eighties were a decade of more blessings and more triumph. In the eighties I had two more grandchildren and became assistant pastor of Bible Holiness Church of God in Christ.

After I left General Material in 1992, I started my own business: B&D Trucking. The future years would bring continuous blessings and opportunities. All my children received a good education. From the birth of my great grandchildren, to celebrating over thirty years with my wife, the blessings have been plentiful. I left Alabama with thirty-two dollars in my pocket and a bus ticket. Many people would not consider that much today. But that money and the word of God helped me start a new life. A better life!

I Know I Can Do It

by Sandra Courts



I was going through life pretending to have an education. I was having a hard time in my life keeping a job and I didn't have an education to keep it. I had my first grandson and I wanted to read to him a bedtime story.

So I went to the library to ask them to help find me someone to help me to read better. So I waited till they found me the best teacher that could help me and teach me patience to learn to read properly.

So I met Virginia Gildrie and her husband. They were the nicest people I have ever met and they wanted to see me read a book on my own. Even though I went to high school and I did graduate from high school I did not know how to read. But that did not stop me from wanting to learn to read better.

So Virginia introduced me to my tutor Barbara. I come to school to work with Barbara on Monday night and also Wednesday night. We work for about 2 hours each night.

She helps me to work on my reading, spelling, sounds and pronouncing my words correctly.

So I needed my driver's license to get to school on my own. I studied the questions and answers in my driver's book. I never thought I would get my driver's license but I did. Now I am reading everything when I shop. I turn the box over and read the ingredients for my health because I have to see how much salt is in the food.

I also learned to use the computer. I started at level 1 and now I am on level 3. And I also have helped my classmates to use the computer. Something that I never thought that I could do.

Even though we are in school to learn we also have fun. Every Christmas we have a big party for the students and teachers and we have so much fun playing Wheel of Fortune. And we also have a dinner in May. The students get certificates for every book they completed.

I always wanted to go to Hollywood and be a superstar and wear diamond rings but not as badly as I want to learn to read a whole book on my own. I know if I keep coming to school someday I can do it.

A Dream

by William Davis



I dream about one day I can get a lot out of life. My job would be closer to where I live. I can get an apartment, a wife, a lot of money and a new car, some day.



The Life of a Single Mother

by Mary Doubrrley



The life of a single mother with a beautiful little girl. Yes, it is very hard, especially when I decided to be a mother. The man that I had been with for eleven years wanted a child for quite some time. He then decided to walk out the door when our baby turned three months old. He left us for a lady that was his first time lover.

He does nothing to support me or our daughter. He does not even call to check on his daughter. He left me and our daughter for someone who has three boys and no job. He provides for her and those boys. It is not only hurtful, it is ridiculous.

My daughter and I currently live with my mother. I am trying to educate myself so that I will be able to better provide for my daughter and myself. If it wasn't for my mother, I would not have a place to live. With the help of my mother, I am able to provide all of the necessities for me and my daughter. My little girl is now 16 months old. I am a proud mother of a beautiful little girl.

Well that is the life of a being a single mother.

My Job

by Dale Eggleston



I work for Veolia Environmental Services. I have been there for a year.

At my job I work in operations. I have many responsibilities, such as driving a loader, putting ash on the truck that goes to the landfill. I also help others as needed with their jobs.

I have two great and helpful bosses at my company, Steve Rienhart and Mike Christian. They have given me the opportunity to go back to school.

Caribbean Carnival in New York City

by Livingston Frazer



I went to New York City on Labor Day weekend for the Caribbean Carnival. It was very exciting. Many people came from all over the Caribbean for the Carnival. I met people from Barbados, Antigua, Grenada, the US Virgin Islands, and Jamaica, my home country. There must have been 50,000 people crowded into Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn.

The parade of floats, marching bands and dancers began at 10:00 a.m. and went on until 9:00 p.m. People from all over the Caribbean wore their country's flag as part of their costume, often as a headband. Many of the dancers wore long dresses with beads, feathers, and masks.

You could buy delicious food from all the countries at the Carnival. My favorite foods were jerk chicken and curried goat - from Jamaica, of course!

School and My Children

by Donna Gaines



I love going to school. I was once going to Lakewood High School in the evenings when my husband was still living. God has called him home to a better place in heaven to rest. He suffered with heart trouble and high blood pressure. I was also working during the day and school at night. Now I'm going back to school which helps me exercise my mind and to keep it on positive things.

I like math, reading, writing and spelling. The moment I met Ms. Ann Palmer, I knew she was a perfect tutor. I have learned a lot from her. She has helped me improve my reading, and I hope to become better at spelling. I have always had very neat handwriting. I have also learned a lot from the reading coach, Mrs. Mary Putnam. I am willing to work hard towards getting my GED.

I also love my sewing class that I take every Wednesday at Roberts Adult Center. I have learned a lot from my sewing teacher as well. I have already made several outfits for myself and my children. I have also made curtains for my new house.

God has blessed me with three beautiful children, which is a wonderful gift that any mother can ever receive. There are people in this world who can't have kids. This has given me the power to be strong to take care of my kids. In my past, I have been through a lot of tragedies; I can't really believe I made it this far in life. I feel in my heart that God has a special plan for me farther down the road. Raising three children is not an easy job; so I asked God to give me the power and strength to keep on going in life. I am looking forward to seeing grandchildren in the future.



To the Literacy Program:

by *“Still Learning”* Joyce Lee Gibson



To the literacy program:

First and foremost I want to thank Virginia Gildrie for putting up with me for these last couple of years. She has been very patient and a great help. She has taught me to separate words, so that I can break them down to be able to read much easier. I feel since I have started with her I have improved my reading about 95% better.

I used to be afraid to read out loud because I could not read as well as the other kids. This inability has been going on for about sixty years. I thought it was about time I did something about it and I did with the good fortune of knowing Virginia. I'm very interested in reading books, newspapers, magazines, just any thing I can get my hands on. Of course, the more I read the better I get.

I read about the literacy program in the Gabber one day and decided to give it a try and boy an I glad I did. Like I said, she is a really good teacher.

Now, as far as my spelling goes, it's horrible. Too many rules, I can't remember them all. I have not given up though. It used to help me when my mother was alive. We would write back and forth to one another, which helped a little. Now I don't write to anyone, so it's much worse for me.

Virginia and I have a good time together. She got me reading all the "The Cat Who" books which are wonderful. I have just started one of these that I haven't read, they are about cats. The whole series takes in 27 or 28 books. So far, I have read 25. I love reading them, they are written by Lillian Jackson Braun, she is a wonderful writer.

If it wasn't for Virginia, I would not be reading as good as I am and would be still missing out on a whole lot. THANKS, Virginia.

Trips I Liked

by Julie Jackasal



I like to go on trips. One time I went to Sea World with my cousin, her son, and my daughter Althea. The children were teenagers. We got there at night. The next day we went to the park. They had three different shows. One was about Shamu. The trainers used their hands to show Shamu what to do. Shamu dove down deep and then came up high and splashed the water on the people.

We saw the penguins. They were not very big. They were standing on ice. They made us smile by the way they walked.

After the park we went back to the hotel and went swimming. We all played Marco Polo in the swimming pool.

The next year we went to Wet and Wild. This was a water park. We went into the wave pool. It was calm at first then it got rough. I thought it was exciting. We also went on the Lazy River. We sat on the round tube and went around and around. Me and my cousin stayed on the Lazy River while the children went on slides.

I enjoyed these trips and hope I can go on some more.

Growing Up in Georgia

by Willie C. Jones



In the 1970s my uncle had a farm in Georgia. He raised tobacco, corn, sugar cane, pigs and sweet potatoes. We planted the tobacco, weeded it, stringing it up on sticks, “cookin’ it” (drying it out), then we packed it onto the burlap sheets, and took it to market (auction). With the corn, we planted, harvested, and took it to the mill to be ground into meal. Later, the sugar cane was cut, the stalks were put between two pressing wheels to squeeze out the juice. The mule walked around and around in a big circle to turn the wheels that squeezed out the juice. Then the juice was cooked and made into cane syrup.

He butchered and sold pigs at market. When we butchered, we had smoked ham, bacon, sausage, pork chops and tenderloin.

He had a pecan orchard. When we got home from school, we had to pick pecans up off the ground. He sold them in big croaker bags by the pound.

My uncle share-cropped land planted in cotton with a neighbor. So we had to pick the cotton, put it in bags to take to market. He also grew peanuts, okra, and string beans. All these, we put in baskets and took to auction. The quality of his produce was top-rate so he made fairly good money: enough to pay taxes, keep up the farm, keep the family fed and clothed.

When I look back on those years, I feel good about them. I was part of a big family. Nothing fancy, but we were fed, warm, sheltered and cared for. We didn't have a lot because we were working most of the time. At Christmas we sometimes went to church. Birthdays were remembered; we sang "Happy Birthday" to the birthday person. We walked to the bus stop out in the country to get to school. The school was small and segregated. We missed a lot of days due to work that needed doing on the farm.

Looking back, although there was a lot of hard work, I think times were better then—not so much worry and stress then as there is now. We boys felt like we were a valuable part of the family. I wish boys nowadays could have that feeling.



Life Changes After Learning to Read

by Hnya Marino



When I was a little girl, living in Morocco, I always wanted to learn how to read. I use to copy words but I didn't know what they meant. In spite of my desire, I didn't have the opportunity to go to school. Fortunately, the people I worked for made it possible for me to come to the United States.

After I came here, I went to school to learn English. I remember that first day, after class, my friend gave me a piece of paper with instructions on how to catch the bus. I was so afraid because I couldn't speak enough English to ask for help. Three buses later, I finally made it home.

I did manage to learn the language quickly but it was a struggle with reading, writing and spelling. Thankfully, I learned about the Literacy program and it has changed my life forever. I'll always be grateful to my tutor, Pat, who has become a good friend and to this wonderful organization that has helped so many people.

Fire Fighter

by Charles Oliver



My son, Jerry Oliver, graduated from Northeast High School. After graduation, Jerry attended St. Petersburg Junior College for two years. Jerry wanted to become a fire fighter. He went to Tampa Fire Academy. After graduation from the academy he became a fire fighter. In 1997 Jerry got promoted to lieutenant. He wants to be captain of his fire station. Jerry plans to take the test for captain soon.

I am very proud of my son.

Leroy's Mother

by Leroy Pompia



My story begins in Fort Meyers, Florida in 1975. My mother lived in one of my apartments next to me for 5 years. We were very close. We laughed and cooked sometimes together and we drove to Church together. I love my mother dearly and I know she loved me too. Days go by and my mother moved with my brother, Jerome. She loved my brother, but she was not very happy living there. He is not a woman and I guess she missed being around my girlfriend. They laughed and laughed and had good time.

My mother is doing very good and my friend and I start going fishing. I had two boats. I like boats. Some times I take my friend, a woman, fishing. We go at 5 a.m. and have a good time. We talk and laugh and go home with lots of fish. My mother comes into the kitchen to see the fish.

I know my mother missed her mother. She would talk so much about her and the old days. She felt good when

she talked about it. But my mother was getting sick. I didn't know what to do. Her chances are not good. I pray to God to help her and me, but she is getting sicker and sicker. I had to move her to a health center. When she talked to me she said, "they tell me I am dying." I tell her to just shut her eyes and pray you will be ok. God loves you and He will be with you to the end.

Months go by and the Lord calls my mother home. I felt like a part of me went with her. I didn't know what to do. I got very sick and had a heart attack because I was so sad. I left Fort Meyers and moved to St. Petersburg with a friend. I was not very happy living with my friend so I started looking for a place of my own. I found my own place and moved in January, 2008. I started school in November, 2007. I am working for my GED. Now I feel happy and like going to school. I have made new friends. I have joined a church and made more friends.

I have made some mistakes in my life, but I know in my heart I have been redeemed. I cried out to the Lord and the Lord heard my cry and blessed me. I put my trust in the Lord and am thankful I had such a wonderful mother.

My story has not ended yet. I am happy to know my tutor and to learn new things and meet new people. I am very happy.

America, the Land of Opportunity

by Damian Robinson



I was born in Jamaica. The climate is beautiful, but so is my new home Florida.

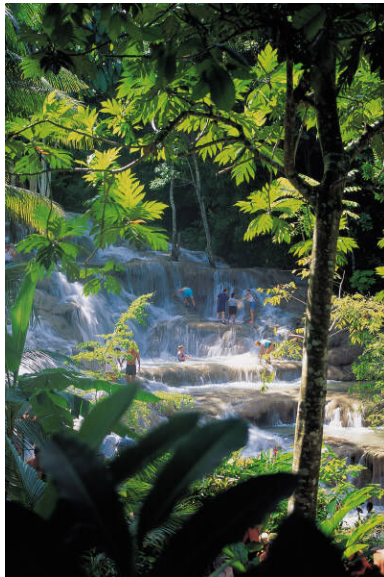
My father was the first Robinson of our family to come to America, where he worked loading ships. He later started a small grocery store, which let him sponsor his five children to come here. We were able to work in the store until we could get a job on our own. Each year he would bring one of us to Florida. I was 15 years old and the last one.

I attended St. Petersburg High School, but my goal is to get a GED so I am able to get a better job that pays more money. I hope to be able to go to school to become an auto mechanic.

My brother had been coming to the reading Center at Lakewood High School, and in 2002 told me to join the center, which I did. It was the best thing I ever did, because I have been learning to read.

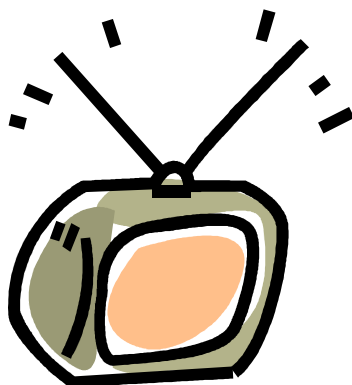
I am in the process of taking my test to become an American citizen. My tutor and I have been working on the questions and answers as well as reading a book which teaches US History from the Pilgrims, and the functions of our Government. The only thing that is holding me up is the \$600 it costs. I have been trying to save some money, but my paychecks are not very big.

Learning the computer was scary at first, but now it is fun. There is so much to learn, and I feel so lucky that my brother told me about the Literacy Council of St. Petersburg. I have had three tutors since 2002. They all have been great. I could never have been able to learn to read without the volunteers and your organization. Thank you so much.



Don't Be Ashamed

by Nathaniel Rollins



My name is Nathaniel Rollins, and I never learned to read. I came from a broken home and had no role model to help me. My mother did not understand how important it is to be able to learn how to read.

I was unhappy and got into a lot of fights in school. By middle school, it was worse. Some of my friends could read but it felt good to be with them.

I went to Richard L. Sanders, a special school for students like me. I had some very good teachers there, but I still could not read.

I went to work under a special train to work program. I worked on an assembly line. I got paid and also got school credits. I graduated in 1989 even though I still couldn't read. I told my mom that I didn't feel like I had graduated as I still couldn't read.

One day I saw a TV program about learning how to read. It gave an 800 number. I called that number and was

told to go to Lakewood Community School. I went there and met Mr. and Mrs. Gildrie. Mrs. Gildrie told me to come back for an interview. I went back. Mrs. Gildrie interviewed me and gave me a placement test.

She set me up with a nice tutor. I couldn't stay after a while because of personal problems, but as soon as I could, I went back. I met with Mitch Smith and worked with him until he left the program.

Barbara Taylor sent me to Virginia Gildrie who has since lost her husband and is living in an Assisted Living Facility across from Bay Pines Veterans Hospital, because of poor health. I go to school 3 days each week. I have finished Skill Book 3 and am working in Challenger 3. I know that someday I will be able to get my GED and go to St. Petersburg College, if I keep working hard.

I want to thank the Literacy Council and all the other people who cared enough to help me.

DON'T BE ASHAMED !!!!!

YOU CAN LEARN !!!!!

THE SHAME COMES WHEN YOU DO

NOTHING ABOUT IT !!!!

The Election

by Kelly Ropel



Voting in November is interesting because there's a woman, a Black man, and an old man. There are two democrats and one republican in the lead. Their names are John McCain, Hillary Clinton, and Barak Obama.

McCain is a senator from Arizona. John McCain is Republican. The governor of Florida is campaigning for him. McCain is the oldest candidate. He says taxes will go down if he is elected.

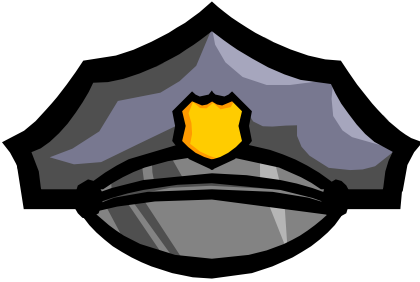
Clinton's husband was President. He and his daughter are helping his wife campaign. Hillary Clinton is a senator from New York. Bill Clinton had an affair with another woman. Hillary was strong about it. Hillary Clinton says everyone will have medical care if she is elected.

Barak Obama is a senator from Illinois. His father is from Kenya. He has a wife and two kids. He says he's going to lower taxes and help everyone get medical care. He is going to stop the war in Iraq.

Many stars were listening to the candidates, and they have helped campaign. Sylvester Stallone supports John McCain. America Ferrara from "Ugly Betty" and Cher support Hillary Clinton. Oprah Winfrey supports Barak Obama. I hope everyone votes on November 4.

In Memory of My Dad

by John Ruiz



I lived in Newark, N.J. for 43 years. My father worked hard as a police officer for 25 years. He got sick. He wanted to bring us to Florida because the area was bad and we could be near my sister and brother. My father and brother drove all the way by truck. It took them 2 days. We moved to Florida in 2005. We got to spend Christmas and New Years with my father. Then he passed January 2006. I wish he could have lived and enjoyed Florida with us. I miss him.



They Said I Wouldn't Learn

by Julie Sanders



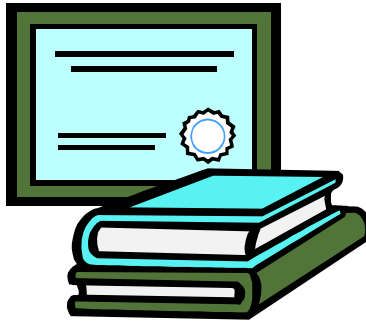
The first time I came to see Virginia was in my senior year in high school and I wanted a regular diploma. I was a very bad reader I know, what I can remember, but I didn't know a lot of words. When I was five years old they told me I was dyslexic and would never learn.

In school I found other ways to get by without reading or spelling. I got to my senior year but I couldn't find a way to get around the senior test. My mother found a tutor and after some hard work with my tutor I began to read books that I never thought possible to read. After working with Virginia I love reading and read many books.

Now I am back with Virginia to help me with my spelling. I want to be able to help my son with his homework and I want to go back to school myself.

Learning to Read

by Charles Vasquez



The first time I met my teacher, I was not sure how I would do in class. My goal is to get my GED. If I get to my goal, I will treasure it for the rest of my life.

In Skillbook 1, I learned the vowel and consonant sounds. Pretty soon I could read more words and answer questions about what I read. In Skillbook 2, I started to learn to write some words and try to spell them. I could read stories in some other books, too. I felt good that I was learning more.

Now I am in Skillbook 3. I am starting to learn the long sounds of the vowels. I will keep trying to reach my goal of getting my GED.

My Class, My Teacher

by Sylvester Williams



My name is Sylvester Williams. I was born and raised in St. Pete, Florida. My mother and I lived together until she passed away in January.

I asked my sister if I could go to school and learn to read. She found out about this program and enrolled me.

This is my fourth week and I enjoy my class and teacher.

A Book Review

by Fred Wintons



We learn how to read all types of books. One I especially liked was The True Story of Balto by Natalie Standiford. This book was very interesting and held my attention. It made me want to read because I wanted to find out what happened.

Balto was a lead sled dog in Nome, Alaska in 1925. A doctor in Nome found that two children had a terrible sickness called diphtheria. He didn't have the medicine he needed for them in the town. He had to send to Anchorage to get it. Anchorage was 800 miles from Nome.

The first think they did was put the medicine on a train, but the train got stuck in the snow. The townspeople in Nome called a meeting to discuss how to get the medicine. The mayor announced on the radio that they needed help from all the sled drivers. Gunnar was Balto's driver and

knew he had the best sled dog team. They set up a dog relay.

A blizzard was coming. Gunnar and Balto were waiting for two days for the medicine to get to their starting point. Along the way, their sled turned over, and the medicine was lost. Gunnar dug through the snow and found it. When they went over a frozen river, Balto stopped the dog team because he knew the ice was breaking. They got back on the land trail.

When they got to Point Safety to give the medicine to the next dog sled team, no one was there. They had to keep going and got to Nome after 20 straight hours and 53 miles. The doctor was surprised to see them. He gave the children the medicine, and the town of Nome was saved.

This was a good story from the beginning. I would recommend this book to other students.

