

The Day That Changed My Life

by Synthia Bovil

I was born in Haiti, with a hole in my heart. I never went to school. I had surgery to fix the hole, but I got sick again. When I arrived in the United States in 2004 and went to the hospital in St. Petersburg, I was very sick. I was seventeen. I didn't speak English. I didn't understand what was happening, but I knew I was going to have surgery again.

There was water in my lung and the doctors had to treat me for almost a month before the surgery. Then I had the surgery, but the doctor told the family I was living with that he was taking a chance. He didn't know if I was going to make it.

Since the surgery I have stayed with the same family in St. Petersburg. They didn't know me, but they opened their house to me. They treat me like I'm their own daughter. They want good things for me.

Now I am twenty-seven. I go to Tomlinson Adult Learning Center and I am learning to read and write. I have taken a course in cake decorating and I would like to work at that. My friend is teaching me how to paint with watercolors. I hope that maybe one day I can be a real painter. I am starting work as a caregiver for a boy who can't stand or walk. I will help him get ready for school in the morning. I am very happy to help him, not just for the money.

I have to be careful but my life is pretty good.

My Personal Story
by Amanda Mattingly

My dad helped me grow up to be a beautiful young lady. He supported me in school and getting my first job.

My dad was in the Army. We lived in North Carolina, Oklahoma, Alaska, and New Jersey, too. My sister and I were born in Frankfurt, Germany. I was an "Army brat."

When we lived in Oklahoma, I went to Garfield Elementary School. My teacher was Mrs. Johnson. She was very special to me. My dad was great in the Army. He made First Sergeant in Oklahoma and retired in Alaska. When I was in Oklahoma at my school, my parents surprised me for my birthday with Garfield the Cat and balloons. I was six years old.

My family moved to the North Pole. I went to Chena Elementary School for 2nd to 4th grades. When I lived there, I saw the Northern Lights. I was very young, so all I remember is they were very colorful. We lived on military post. Life on a military post was fun. Every morning the bugle blew at 6:00 am to wake everyone up.

I have been working with my tutor on my math and reading. My scores have increased three grade levels. I'm working on getting my GED. I know in time this will come true. My goal in life is to become a teacher's aide. I will make my dad proud.

MY GOALS AND AMBITIONS

by Lorraine Eggleston

I want to tell you about my goals and ambitions. I am in school now and that is my first goal; to get more education. I am going to Northeast Community School. I meet with Mrs. Nancy, my tutor through the Literacy Council of St. Petersburg. One reason I want to learn more is so I can have a career one day. I am thinking maybe I could be a stocker in a store or work in a restaurant. By getting more education I will be able to do something more useful and interesting than partying.

My second goal is to get married. I want to find love like my parents. They have been together for 32 years. They supported all of us in good times and bad times. I want my husband to be my best friend and someone to enjoy my life with.

I also want to become a mom because I love children. They bring me joy in my life. I want to give love to a child like my parents gave me.

Those are my goals and I am sticking to them!

Weekend Cook
By Dale Eggleston

Sometimes I like to cook on the grill. I like to fix chicken and vegetables. My wife makes the salad and the sauce.

If the weather is good, I cook for the family. Sometimes I make meatloaf. I put in onions and green peppers. I put the meat in the pan and put it on the hot grill, then I put the lid down, so it cooks. It cooks for 30 minutes. I let everyone put on their own salt and pepper.

We have all kinds of drinks. We have cool-aid, iced tea, beer, and soda.

We all have a real good time, eating, drinking and talking.