

ESL 5/6 Newsletter

A Note from the Teacher

By Tilla Alexander

This has been a very busy year at Mid-Manhattan and in our ESL 5/6 classes.

Our class started the year with a unit on Latino Music and its influence in our society. We explored the music of Santana, Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, Ritchie Valens and others. As this was the period of Hispanic Culture Month, we also explored Spanish and Mexican history in the Americas. Our students wrote point of view essays and letters based on what they read in class.

In November, we went into depth studying the Mayflower voyage, the Pilgrims, and Wampanoag life. We used a lot of authentic texts from

Scholastic. The students made posters as well as recorded themselves talking about their posters.

In December, we visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art where the students participated in a scavenger hunt.

A highlight of our year was our involvement in the All Write Project of Symphony Space. Ms. Diana Raissis, our instructional facilitator, worked with me and the students with ways to develop and spark their writing. About seventeen students



participated in the project and we had two winners: Nadezdha Angelova and Isatou Sylla.

Our classes went to two performances at Symphony Space, the first when the actors read professional writers' works and the second when they read the selected students' writing from Adult Education classes throughout the city.

Our students also did great work on the African American History Project in which they had to research a famous African

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Special points of interest:

- Interview with Iris Rodriguez-LYFE Social Worker
- Meet Reginald Ballard-School Safety Officer
- The Sustained Reading Project
- Immigrant Nation at Ellis Island
- Symphony Space-All Write-Selections

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The Sustained Reading Project

By Diana Raissis, Instructional Facilitator, Region 5

The Sustained Independent Reading project was created in Region 8 by BE 3 teacher Melissa Rocha. It was a big success and following its success, I adapted and introduced it in the Fall of 2013 to a group of BE

and upper level ESL instructors. ESL 5/6 instructor Jessica Jordan began Sustained Independent Reading in the Fall of 2013 and has continued it until now (June 2014). In the Spring of 2014, ESL 6

Instructor Tilla Alexander and BE 2 Instructor Kim Walker also began the sustained reading project adapting to their classes. In the Fall, I worked closely and on

(Continued on page 2)

A Note from the Teacher (continued)

American and then write a monologue as that person. Then, we worked on pronunciation, phrasing, and delivery. Four students were chosen to perform at Mid-Manhattan's Black History/Women's History Celebration. Robinson Betances performed as Jackie Robinson, Sam Pierre as Marcus Garvey, Mbayang Thiaw as Aretha Franklin, and Houria Haili performed Aissatou Diallo's piece on Condoleezza Rice. I was so proud!

During our spring break, we visited Ellis Island for the launch of the Immigration Nation Project. I was amazed that over 33 students came on this trip and participated fully. The students had to write about their

immigration experience and had their pictures taken. We watched two films about immigrants and immigration issues and participated in an interactive workshop. Our photos were posted on Facebook and Twitter. In class, we have been working on the Immigrant Nation website where many of the students posted responses to immigrant stories.

In May, we started our sustained reading project. We read three short stories from the book One-Way Ticket. You will read more about this pro-

ject in Diana Raissis' article. We are now reading, Ann Cameron's The Most Beautiful Place in the World.

Several students participated in the NYS TESOL Essay Contest based on a quote of Nelson Mandela. I was thrilled that Tiemoko Soumahouro won 2nd place in the adult division.

We are looking forward to the NYC ELL Conference at El Museo del Barrio.

I wish everyone a fantastic summer.



Sustained Reading Project Continued

(Continued from page 1)

an ongoing basis with Jessica Jordan's class. Jessica's class read the *One Way Ticket Short Stories* and *How Tia Lola Came to Visit* books. The purpose was to bring out the enjoyment of reading and to develop the strategies that good readers employ. Readings were systematic and took place three days a week every week with new strategies being introduced each week.

I would like to thank Melissa Rocha for her creation and to thank Region 8 I.F. Katie Naplatarski for sharing the resources.

Here is an interview I conducted with Jessica Jordan.

Q. How did your students like the sustained independent reading and did they understand the concept?

A. Jessica: Feedback from students was that they enjoyed the sustained reading but some students felt there was too much focus on reading and not enough focus on speaking. I had to tweak it so that there was also discussion following the reading parts.

Q. What would you say were its successes? What were the challenges?

A. Jessica: Successes: Students' ability to speak about more than their personal lives grew and they were able to have more academic discussions about the ideas and issues that the book brought up.

Challenges: Not everyone's at the same reading level and not everyone has the stamina to focus on a reading for a suggested period of time. It was a challenge for me, the teacher, to get the students to understand the importance of sustained independent reading.

Do you feel that your students improved their reading and writing as a result of sustained independent reading?

Jessica: Yes – as the reading went on they were quicker in their responses to questions and didn't require as much time to process the questions related to the reading. Discussions were louder, more animated, more comfortable talking in their groups – unlike in the beginning where students relied on the teacher to explain everything vs. explanation coming from group discussion.

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Sustained Reading (Continued)

(Continued from page 2)

Q Will you continue it next school year and if so, would you change anything? Choice of books...

A. Jessica: Yes, definitely! I would like to change the choice of books – possibly another immigrant story: Amy Tan... maybe read ‘Seedfolks’ that ties into my lessons on the environment. I regret not doing ‘Raisin in the Sun’ because there are so many activities surrounding it. I will start earlier next year.

B. Tilla Alexander’s ESL 6 class joined the sustained reading project recently. Here are some comments from her students: Maguette & Houria.

Q. What book are you reading?

A. **One-Way Ticket and Most Beautiful Place in the World.**

Q. How are you enjoying the sustained independent reading project

A. Maguette: “I like the strategy of re-reading because I understand the words more and if you re-read you see words you missed from the 1st reading. I also like Point of View writing.

B. Houria: “I like looking at the pictures in the beginning of the reading to guess (to predict) and we have to use our imagination. Re-reading helps us to understand vocabulary better. I like working in groups too, because each one of us has different ideas and that helps us to ‘get’ the book.

Q. What’s your favorite part of the Sustained Independent Reading project?

A. Houria: “Point of View writing because it helps us to remember something we learned and we put ourselves in the situation.”

B. Maguette: “Point of View writing because you take the place of somebody in the book and you write. Like in “The Girl with the Green Eyes,” I took the place of the character Julie and I think about how she will finish her life with the tall man.”

C. Houria: “In that story, I think of her husband, Bill, and his surprise!”

Interviewing BE 2 instructor Kim Walker, I found out the following:

Q. What book or books have you been reading as part of the sustained reading project?.

A. *We’ve been reading the “Blufords” series: Payback and Until We Meet Again.*

Q. Have your students enjoyed the sustained reading project.

A. *Yes. They really enjoy making the “Text to Self” connection most.*

Q. Would you like to continue doing sustained reading next school year? If yes, what would you do differently?

A. *I would like to do it again, but I’d want them all to read the same book. I’d like the students to read the book, “Monster” as it’s a more adult experience –that they’ve experienced and can relate to. I would also like to read “The Watsons Go to Birmingham” to show my students what the Black experience is in the U.S. and for them to know that travel is for pleasure also.*



Kim Walker’s Class



Tilla Alexander’s Class



Jessica Jordan’s Class

Change In My Life

By Francoise Mutombo

When people come to America, they have their own experiences, but they all have to make changes in their lives. One often has difficulties in the new country. Let me tell you about my beginning in this new country.

When I came to America, my life changed suddenly because I was five months pregnant with my first child. I was in a new country, did not speak one word of English, and had nobody with me such as family or friends. My husband did not have time to explain to me about American life. I was alone crying and thinking about my family. Some days I thought I should go back to Paris because I did not understand when

people asked me things. My appointments at the hospital were very difficult, but I tried to understand what the doctor told me about my pregnancy.

Then my baby was born and I started to be a mother for my child. The first week was difficult because I was learning but afterwards I was okay. When my child came into my life, my mind changed. I thought I should learn English because I started thinking of the future. I need to help my child to read and write.

Learning English has helped me to realize my goals and make my future better. Now I can dream about going to

college. School gives me other chances in my life. So please! Don't give up. No matter how hard things are, you can and you will achieve your goals.



Francoise and daughter

My First Day in Harlem

By Laila Nagi

Then I moved to Harlem. I felt like I had just come to America. I didn't know anybody in that area and I didn't know about the subway and shopping malls.

The first month I was scared to go outside because everyone said that Harlem was dangerous. This is what I heard before I moved. Then one day my children and I went to the supermarket called Fine Fare. I went inside. I felt like I was in C-Town because I used to

shop in C-Town in Brooklyn. I felt good and my children too.

I was scared to go outside after 5 and 6 P.M. It was so noisy in this place especially at night and I couldn't sleep.

I had to go outside because I had to drop and pick up my children from school. I met people every day that were nice.

Day by day I felt good and not scared. Most people in Harlem were Muslim.

Now I feel that everyone is my friend. I

also found a good school that helps me learn English. All of my classmates are friendly and my teacher is nice and kind to us.

Now I like everyone and everywhere in Harlem.



Laila Nagi

Dear Tom (a Point of View letter)

By Hipolito Liriano

Dear Tom,

This letter is to inform you that next time you enter the United States or another country, you cannot take money from that country with you. If you do it again, you will continue to have problems. That's the reason why you are in prison. I hope that when you get free from jail, you will have some advice for another person that tries to do the

same. I feel happy because you are meeting some interesting people that are very important for you during your life in prison and maybe for the rest of your life.

I hope to see you soon.

Your friend,

Hipolito Liriano



A Letter

By *Juan Nicolas*

Dear Classmates and Teachers,

Today, I am writing my newsletter article to express my appreciation and achievements and experiences that, in fact, I have gained at MMALC.

In the first place, I was able to improve my communication—understanding and speaking much more fluently than two years ago.

Secondly, I have learned a lot from the United States—its origins, culture as well as its composition and form of government. For example, I can mention the heritage month of African Americans when I was inspired by some figures that exceeded the obstacles and different circumstances and

persevered. Some of these are Oprah Winfrey, Jackie Robinson, Marcus Garvey and others.

And finally, I've had wonderful experience to learn about arts, music, history and workshops. This has been through trips to the museums, squares and other places.

In conclusion, I have been blessed for having an opportunity of being at MMALC and have shared for almost two years with new friends from different nations and languages.



Juan Nicolas

A Point of View Writing based on “South for the Winter.” From One-Way Ticket

By *Gamaliel Suero*

From the point of view of the police officer:

Last night we were on duty at the train station. We were doing our routine. We were checking the slow train to Bulgaria. As always, we were looking for suspicious people or things they have with them. When we found someone or something that he or she does that isn't normal, we get him or her off the train and take him or her to our office at the train station.

When we were in the train, we saw some young guys and took them with us to the police office. Once there, we asked them for their passports and any kind of ID. We asked them where they are going, what they had with them etc. You know, routine things.

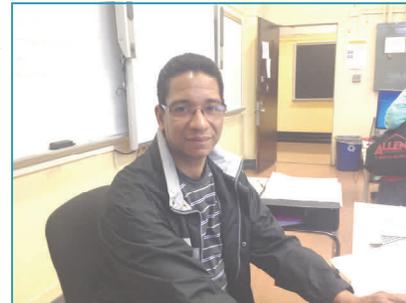
We asked a young English man who seemed like an interesting person to investigate. At the office we asked

him for the usual stuff. After he gave us

“When we were in the train, we saw some young guys and took them with us to the police office”

all that we asked and everything was okay. We then turned over his bag. When he did it, what a surprise: there was a lot of money getting out of his bag. It was the sum of 200,000 American dollars!

We asked him about the money which he wasn't able to explain. He just said it wasn't his money. So we had to get him to jail because it is illegal to have that sum of money without proof that he earned it in a legal way.



Gamaliel Suero

About Nelson Mandela

By Dade Teteui

Many countries around the world have no political stability, no peace, no liberty or freedom. For that civilians move from their own country to another one. What should we do right now to treat or remedy that?

I would, according to this idea propose some solution. Everyone, everywhere he is according to his standard of living has to take care of himself and try the same for their neighbor. Rolichlachla N. Mandela was one, the most famous, who fought in this way for freedom or liberty for his country and everywhere else.

In fact, R. Mandela was born on July

18, 1918 in Mvezo (South Africa). He became President of South Africa (May 9, 1994 to June 14, 1999) after twenty-seven years in jail (August 5, 1962 to February 11, 1990). He had the courage to push his country to freedom. For that, he made many actions against apartheid. Although the way was so difficult, he won—the consequence of his determination.

Nelson Mandela, freedom is in your hand Show us the way to freedom in

our hand of Africa. You were the best and famous president in Africa and around the world.



Dade Teteui

In this way, I wish, it's possible to send your spirit to all the presidents in this planet, especially on the African continent and all countries without peace. Show anyone the way to help the people not to destroy.

Mandela, pray for all presidents in the way of good presidency.

Rest in peace Rolichlala Nelson Mandela.

At the Airport

By Houria Haili

This event happened a few years ago, at the airport— Houari Boumediene where I was working as a custom's officer.

My office got information that the girls were carrying gold in their bodies.

Unfortunately, we were asking them about it and looking for it. When the airplane arrived, the two girls were asked to come with us and we took their bags, too. We put them in the

"My office got information that the girls were carrying gold in their bodies."

room, where we looked at their passports, checked their bags. After doing our job, we realized that nothing suspi-

cious was noticed. We apologized for the inconvenient situation and let them go.



Black and Women's History Month Celebration

By Sam Pierre

Wednesday, March 26, 2014 was a special day at Mid-Manhattan. We celebrated African American History Month. That day, I learned the history of Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center and the people who are in charge of the school.. Moreover, I was one who did the biographic presentation of Marcus Garvey, Jr. in front of the audience. Furthermore, I was relaxed because I succeeded in memorizing the text that I

had to present. Even though the art of speaking in public is not given to everyone, I had self-confidence to present. After that, I realized that kind of exercise helps me improve my English speaking.

As a conclusion, I can say that all this success on this day was due to the good will of Mrs. Tilla who guided us during the repetitions.



Sam Pierre

Point of View– Tom Walsh

By Maquette Diop

My name is Tom Walsh. I like to travel from one place to another, meet people, have a good life and when I need money I look for a job and do it. I like to go south for the winter visiting a lot of countries and I always travel by train because I like trains. We can walk inside the train and meet a lot of people. I was traveling on the train to Sofia in Bulgaria when I met two girls, Melanie and Carol. They were very nice. We had a conversation the first time and I really liked them. They knew a lot of countries. They were American and liked Europe. All the way to Sofia, we talked, laughed, went to the restaurant, ate together. I told them a lot of stories about my life. I asked them about Sofia because I didn't know the country. We planned to meet in Sofia for the weekend at the hotel restaurant; we had a good plan.

Then, when the train crossed Bela Palanka, they got off. I was so happy to meet them and thought about them, the things we were going to do over the weekend in Sofia. I was on the train thinking about my life when suddenly everything turned another way. The police stopped the train and were looking for something when they took my bag and found all the money, \$200,000. It was a big surprise for me because I never in my life saw so much money. Then I realized their plan. I went to prison for two years and never saw those girls again. My life was bad, but I learned something positive. I met new people who were very nice.

Now I'm out of prison and live in Africa in Senegal. A very nice country. The food is so good and the people are beautiful. The weather is so nice and I met a

nice girl who became my wife. We have a very beautiful girl and I'm very happy with my new family. Now, in my new life, I don't want to know people like Melanie and Carol..



Maquette Diop

How I Became Jackie Robinson

By Robinson Betances

On March 26th, 2014 we celebrated Black and Women's History Month in the auditorium at the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center and I spoke as Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play in major league baseball.

I felt so proud and at the same time very happy to talk about him because he was a great baseball player and he also broke the baseball color line and challenged the traditional basis of segregation, which then marked many other aspects of American life and he contributed significantly to the civil rights movement.

I enjoyed that day so much because many people spoke about different African Americans that contributed to make a difference in the world.

One of Jackie Robinson's quotes was, "I'm not concerned with your liking or disliking me. All I ask is that you respect me as a human being."

I think we have to respect each other because war is not good for the world. We need a better world, and I believe it.

Peace is beautiful and quiet and I want to

see a different world.



Our Experience at Ellis Island

By Gamalier Suero

On April 22 Ms. Tilla Alexander and her ESL students were invited to participate in a very special activity at Ellis Island, by the team of Immigrant Nation. Immigrant Nation is an interactive website, where we can watch some shorts documentaries about immigration experiences; which are told by the people who immigrated or their ancestors.

The activity was scheduled at Ellis Island Museum, and we had a very exciting program to follow. When we arrived, we all met at the lobby of the museum.

The first step of the program was an introduction the history of the immigration in The United States, its causes and consequences, most common places from people immigrated, importance of Ellis Island in the process of legal entrance of immigrants to The United States, how long Ellis Island was used in the process, etc.

After our travel through immigration history, we were asked to do a short writing about our immigration experience or our ancestors'. How we or they came here, who else came, why, etc.

Every single person was taken a picture, and was added to the person's writing. After that, all the writings were show on a board. I feel like I am part of the immigration history of this great country since that moment, because part of my experience as an immigrant was shared like other's ones.

The next step was at the auditorium of the museum. In there we watched a documentary about an immigrant woman, who became a caretaker when she came to The United States. At the moment the documentary was made, she was taking care of an old woman. Who was Japanese American and was at the end of her life. The point is, the caretaker and the old woman got into a relationship farther than it was supposed to be. They got very closed and the caretaker felt some kind of appreciation for the old woman.

Unfortunately, one night the old woman passed away. The caretaker was holding her hand when the old woman got her last breath.

At the end of the film, the caretaker says that she misses her, but she has to keep going. It's sad but it is the reality.

In this strong story I could realized some of the situations that an immigrant could have in his or her condition, when he or she is in another place which it isn't his or her origin country.

After we watched the documentary, We continued with our schedule.

The others steps were as such exciting as the ones I had mentioned before.

This trip was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about important topics of the immigration in The United States. I feel more confidence about my condition of immigrant since I participated in this great activity.



Gamalier Suero

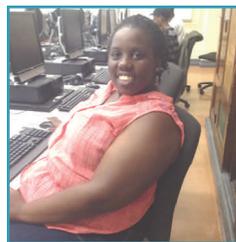
Iris Rodriguez — Social Worker for LYFE

By Francoise Mutomba

I interviewed Iris Rodriguez. She is the social worker for the LYFE Program. It is a day care center which helps mothers to take care of the child when the parent is studying at MMALC. I am one of the mothers and Iris helps me as a social worker to build my goals. Let me tell you about Iris Rodriguez.

Iris Rodrigues was born in the Dominican Republic. Her parents brought her

to America when she was a baby. She grew up in New York city. She went to college where she graduated with a Master's in Clinical Social Work. She was working 17years as a social work-



er. She worked in many places like hospitals, shelters, and at an early intervention and teenager program.

The Interview

1. Why did you choose to work in the LYFE program.

I wanted to make a difference for teenagers' lives and help them make their

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Wine or Vinegar?

By Maria Medina

Usually I make wine to drink at our December party. Often I put the wine in a special bottle to show off.

One day, my daughter had a visit from friends. She asked her friends what they wanted to drink. She remembered my famous wine and offered them cups of wine.

She never knew that the wine was finished and I put vinegar into the bottle the night before.

O.M.G. When her friends drank the liquid they said, "Nooooo" It was vinegar!!! My daughter's face turned red and said to them. "O.M.G. the wine is no good!"

When I came home, she told me what happened with her friends and the wine. I said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I put vinegar in the bottle because the wine was finished last week.

"God vinegar," she said, "You never told me about that change! It looked similar.

After this experience, she sometimes asks me and I explain to her about changes in our home.



Maria Medina

Interview with Iris Rodriguez (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

lives better.

2. Most of the parents are from other countries and don't speak good English. Do you learn about their culture.

Yes, I know that their cultures are different from mine. I think it is interesting to learn about them. It's also fun to learn about different cultures.

3. The students come with their cultures. Do you understand why they learn English?

Yes, I understand why they learn English. They want a better life or to help their children for homework.

4. This program is different from other programs in LYFE. Why do you choose to work with adults.

I don't choose to work with adults. They just put me here. But I think adults and teenagers need the same help. It doesn't matter what age they are.

5. As a social worker why do you think that MMALC created this pro-

"I am happy to make a difference in the people's lives."

gram for the students.

I think this program is good for persons who want a better life and it makes them feel less worried about their children.

6. Do you think adults need help like the teenagers because they come from other countries and have difficulties with English?

I think people from different countries need emotional support and help in navigating the new system in America.

7. Do you think students realize their goals when they come to MMALC.

It depends on the situation (home) of

the student and motivation they have to realize their goals. As a specialist, I help them to do this.

In conclusion, during my career I am happy to make a difference in the people's lives. I still have some students call me and tell me their progress in their lives. I'm happy to give people great satisfaction and this gives them hope in their lives.

The Restaurant “The Cat’s Meow”

By *Sheila Gonzalez*

My name is Garfia and right now I’m working in a restaurant. One day eight cats come into the restaurant. They are making a lot of noise, talking about food, rats, and a beautiful woman named Misu. When I come to take their order, the first cat says he wants fish while the others ask for chicken soup. But I become a bit worried because I don’t see who is going to pay. I feel I have to call the

chef because last week they came and didn’t pay. I’m not sure they have money.

The chef comes to help me and check the table. “Oh, my God!” he shouts. I don’t know why he’s so surprised. “Garfia,” he said. “These cats can have anything they want.” Now I am surprised. He tells me that these cats are his family who he hasn’t seen for a long time. I get nervous; maybe I am

going to lose my job. But the chef tells me not to worry. I’m not going to forget this experience. I am not going to prejudge any customer because you never know who the customers will turn out to be at “The Cat’s Me-



Sheila, Mariana, and Laida

Where In The World Are We Going?

By *Isatou Sillah*

On the bus from New York to Washington, D.C., the phone of a girl sitting near me started to ring. She picked it up and said, “Honey, I am on a bus going to California for a funeral. I will call you when I get there.” Then, another phone started ringing and the girl in front of me picked it up, saying,

“Sweetheart, I’m on my way to Miami to start graduate school for my master’s degree.” On the other side of the bus across from me, another young lady’s phone started ringing. “Daddy, sorry, I’m on my way to Philadelphia for the job interview. I’ll call you later.”

A man who was sitting at the back of the bus suddenly raised his voice in anger, “Driver, stop. Please park this bus and tell me exactly where this bus is going. He answered, “Before I left, I was sure it was going to Washington, D.C., but now I am getting confused.

Please Show Your School ID

By *Eva Czimmer*

Every morning when I arrive at school, there is a man who is saying to everybody: “Please show your school ID ! His name is Reginald Ballard. He is a school safety agent. He works at the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center.

He is a very strict person. If you don’t have your school ID or any kind of ID, he won’t let you get into the school.

He worked fifty years for the U.S. Federal govern-



Eva and Reginald Ballard

ment. He’s got a pension, but he didn’t want to stay home doing nothing because it is so boring for him. So, he de-

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Lost My Backpack

By José Castillo

After a hard day of work
I feel tired.....I go back home
By train.....I am sitting as
I start to fall asleep.
I put my backpack down be-
tween my legs
After five minutes,
I feel someone touch my knee,
I wake up.
I think someone is saying,
“Hello or Goodbye”
One man walks out,
Then the train doors close and

The train begins to move.
I try to go back to sleep...
But something feels different
My backpack has disappeared!



The Lost T-Shirt

By Robinson Betances

One day my friend lost his T-shirt in school and he was very impatient to find it, and he was sweating so much and I asked him, why are you sweating like that? Are you sick? What's the matter with you? And he answered me, “I need to find my teacher, have you seen my teacher,” he asked me and I said, “Oh yes, he is in the classroom teaching English, the polyglot right?” And he grimly said to

me, “What? What are you talking about? You haven't got a clue,” and I told him that he had asked me about his teacher, so I told him that he was in his classroom teaching English. Then he said, “Oh, Oh, Oh... No, No, No!! I'm sorry for my pronunciation, it was a misunderstanding, I'm not talking about my teacher, I'm talking about my T-shirt that I lost yesterday in the morning,” and I said laughing, “I

haven't seen your t-shirt, but try to improve your pronunciation for the next time.”



Robinson Betances

Please Show Your School ID (Continued)

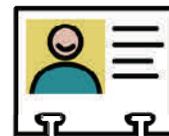
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cided to work again, and he has been doing this job for three years.

Mr. Ballard likes children, and young people, so this kind of work is not difficult for him.

Some people think that he is a tough guy, but he is a nice person who is doing his job.

When he asks for IDs he is following safety rules that are for our good and security.



Forced Marriage *

By Tiemoko Soumohouro

Marriage is one of the most important things in our lives. It is a sacred act that unites two partners who decide freely to join their lives. However, in many communities, including mine, forced marriage is still widely practiced. This social evil, which consequences are multiple and various, profoundly affects our societies.

Widely practiced in African societies, forced marriage affects both women and men, but women are more subject to this tradition. Forced marriage victims are generally subject to many troubles such as affective disorders. People, who have been forced to get married with partners they don't like, are constantly anxious, sad and depressed. These bad feelings sometimes lead to suicide. The children from forced marriage may also experience emotional troubles in their future lives. These children often become thugs.

Moreover women of forced marriage often experience domes-

tic violence. Indeed, a wife who will refuse to comply with the will of the husband chosen for her will have to undergo physical or psychological violence from her husband and sometimes from her own parents. I still remember the case of one of my cousins, Massandje who was hospitalized two times after being beaten by the husband her father chose for her. She is really unhappy in her home.

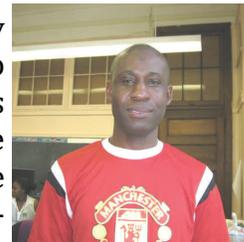
However, it may happen that this violence turns against the husband. That happened a few years ago in my country when a young woman called Fanta had been forced by her parents to get married to one of their cousins. Frequently beaten by this man, she decided one day to free herself from this burden by stabbing her husband in his sleep. Her husband died. Arrested by the Police for murder, Fanta will finally be released under pressure by women's associations.

They shifted the blame of this desperate act to Fanta's parents. This sad story profoundly raised people's awareness of the dangers of this practice that still affects many communities.

In conclusion, we can say that forced marriage is one of the worst social evils our societies have to face. That's why we plan in the future to create a non-governmental organization to fight this practice. We will do this by sensitizing, on the one hand, parents to the dangers of forced marriage. On the other hand, victims will be nurtured and helped.

**NYSTESOL Essay Contest*

2nd Place-University/Adult Division



My Immigrant Life

By Reine Kodia

Five years ago I wanted to find out the world, to know about the rest of the world. But I did not expect how it can be to live far away your native country, the first world you built everything. In 2010 I went to Ukraine to continue my study, the first year I learn Russian and I met many other people from different countries. One of my new friends was from Cameroon and we spent a good time before she joins her husband to the USA. One day she called me and ask me for my pictures because she wanted to play



Reine Kodia

visa lottery for me, I sent her my pictures and one year later she call me again to tell me that I won visa lottery. I was so excited to know that I am going to America. I never plan that but it was a good opportunities.in September 2013 I finally join my friend to Virginia. I stayed two months with them then I came to New York City because I have family here.

Language is the first barrier. Language can be a big obstacle, you can't speak with people, you can't be understood well and people do not spend their time to understand what you want to say and it is hard to get a good job. Language forestalls you to make friend. Then the native people are scared of you because they don't know you, what kind of life you have. Who are you? So they don't give you a chance to be yourself. You have to impress them, you have to be special to get their at-

Continued below

tention, or make something wonderful.

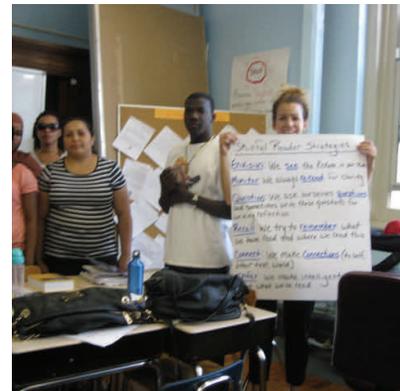
Life in the USA is very different from my country everything here is faster, people are active and we don't have the same culture. In CONGO we don't celebrate thanksgiving I knew about that on movies. I did not have many difficulties when I came here,

“Language is the first barrier. Language can be a big obstacle.”

because I knew many things about the USA and I did not come directly from my country. So I

knew a little what live in foreign country means. I could speak some but I had an accent and my English was not so good. So I can't get a good job that why I am taking ESL classes at MMALC to improve my English. Life is not easy wherever you are so I need to improve myself to have a place in this new life.

MORE PHOTOS



A Wonderful Woman

By Mbayang Thiao

In life, sometimes you meet a person who can definitely change your destiny. His influence can be positive or negative. I met a lady who, with her nice tongue, her good heart and her intelligence, is special for me. I want to talk about her because she is for me a model of what nice person is.

In 2002, I had just graduated in tourism and hotel management. I gave evidence of resume almost everywhere. One day, a hotel called me to say that I could begin an internship for a month without pay. But it was not a problem because I was very happy at the idea of entering the world of the work.

So, I spent this month at the hotel reception where I learned lot of things. There was a lady, the manager of accommodations, and our boss, but we had no direct relationship because she was in her office and I was at the reception desk. But my supervisor gave her my report. At the end of the month, she thanked me a lot and wished me all the best at my future job. However, I requested to continue to come because not only did I have the time, but I wanted to continue to learn more. She told me that it raised no problem, and I could continue to come to her office and she would teach me all about the accommodation department.

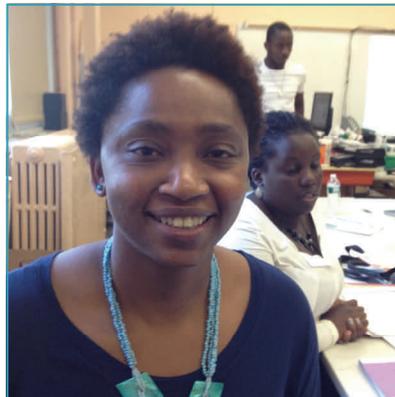
Our relationship began like this and I said to myself that this woman is really kind. She trusted me at once; we used to talk about many facets of life. Months passed and things were going well, but she was frustrated because I wasn't paid. To her, it was unfair. One day, she told me that we would visit the owner of the hotel together because the director didn't want to pay me. But the director also wasn't wrong because I had no contract and it was my choice to stay there. It was for my own experience because for me, the more you practice, the better you become! So, we saw the owner and my supervisor spoke so well of me that the owner decided to write a check to me every month with his own money. Both my supervisor

and I were very happy. After that, she wanted me to be a director that another hotel called me and I courage him to commit to me. One month vacation and there was nobody else to do manager because there was only me to re-make me a contract. She also added that it was necessary to think about her success a contract. She was really happy and I felt

At that time, I was young, passion-irritable. Sometimes, I had small personal me, she knew that something was wrong.

life, her problems when she was my age. Her philosophy was to leave all her troubles in her car in the morning and get back into them upon returning home. In that way, I learned to develop the spirit of overtaking, the sense of responsibility and to have self-respect. She also made me understand the importance of being reasonable, tempered, and liking my job. The most important, always be present when someone needs you or your help.

I will never grow tired to speaking about her because, this respectable and exceptional lady has contributed so much to my life. I always try to follow her advice everywhere where I go.



regular recruit. She told to the was going to leave, just to en-later, the desk clerks had to go in their jobs. She returned to see the place them, so it was the time to she was soon going to retire and sor. Finally, the director gave me protected.

ate, easygoing and sometimes problems. But as soon as she saw Then, she talked me about her

My Journey to Ellis Island

By Houria Haili

The museum of the American immigrants is the most important historic monument visited by tourists. It is located in Ellis Island in New York. The students of Adults Education Program in Manhattan were invited to visit this museum last month.

We met our teacher at Battery Park and went to Ellis Island by ferry. I was so excited. It was my first time to ferry.

When I entered to the building I was impressed by the decoration of the entrance, the wall was full of immigrant pictures and exhibition of the ancient objects belong to ancestral immigrants.

I think the descendants of those families nowadays are con-

sidered among Americans citizens.

We met the monitor her at the hall, she was very excited and enthusiast and happy to lead us. She told us that many activities were organized to cover this event.

First, she asked us to stick the (IN) symbol of Immigrant Nation in our arms to be identifying us visitors. Also, we were asked to write about traditional event that we celebrate in our countries and we still celebrate even in the United States. Then, we took pictures as new immigrants too.

Next step, we went to the auditorium, we were greeted by the

director of the immigrant nation who invited us to watch two short documentaries movies related to immigrant experiences: "The Mayor" and "The caretaker". Both movies were interesting because they reflected how new immigrants persevered to achieve their goals. I felt sad for the second story.

After that, he welcomed people who wanted to share their own immigration stories.

What I can underline that this experience give me more motivation and confidence to success and to be creative.



Houria Haili

My Traditional Dress

By Kadiatou Diallo

I like my traditional dress. When I wear it, it reminds me of my country and culture. It is a beautiful dress and I love it. I like to wear it everywhere I am and I like to show how it's important for me and I will never forget about it. When I have a

family party, I will dress in my country's clothes and all my family will dress something like that but different kinds of sewing.



Kadiatou Diallo

Cat Girl School

By Eva Czimmer

Always at 8 P.M. the electric lights are turned off. Everybody needs to sleep for a good night's rest. Nobody wants to go to sleep. They want to keep playing together. They have pillow battles and

tussles
Jumping on the bed or floor
Someone just sits on the bed resting and waiting.
Another goes under the bed to the best place.



She says, "I like it here because nobody can see me." Yes, we are cats and this is cat girl school.

My Experiences in USA

By Nonhou Djedje (Beatrice)

When I came here in April 2012 with my son who was 1 year and a half, it was springtime. The flight took 8 hours and I was so tired because in this flight my son didn't want to sit at the same place for a long time, so he was asking for to use the restroom, asking to get down on this plane. When I finished with immigration paper to the airport, we went home; the next day we went shopping and my first impression was the weather. It was so cold to me. My first week in USA was terrible, because everything looking bigger and higher, the buildings, houses, roads, and sometimes when I walked on the street, I felt like the building was going

to fall on me. Nine weeks later, I got pregnant with my second child. It was so difficult with the foods because every wishes was in my country. During this pregnancy I lost so much weight and when my daughter was born she was very small. I was afraid to lift her and give her a bath. Then I was really scared about her. For my first pregnancy in my country my mother did everything. She took care of my son, on this time I was going to school so I didn't learn anything about taking care of my daughter. When my daughter was 4 months, I was depressed. Then I talked about this with my doctor. She helped me to find some program for

depressed women after giving birth.



My First Impression

By Aissatou (Aisha) Diallo

When I got off the boat in Ellis Island, I felt like I was in Gorée Island in my country, Senegal, in West Africa. The two islands are almost similar.

Gorée Island is where they took slaves to bring them to America and Europe. In there, there's a museum whose name 'Maison des Esclaves' which means in English 'slave house.' Ellis Island was where the immigrants got off when they came to the U.S. And I heard that they had to do a check up to see if they



were healthy or not. If yes, they could stay in the U.S. If no, they returned them to their country.

In fact, the similarity between Gorée Island and

Ellis Island for me are the structure and the museum, collection point. But there are some differences: In Ellis

Island people were coming by themselves and in Gorée Island people were kidnapped and sold and then, they went there by force.

I really loved my trip to Ellis Island with my teacher and classmates. I spent a good time there because it was instructive for me. We also did many activities and that was awesome. I loved our trip and I am ready to make it again.

My Immigrant Life

By Hawa Bah

My name is Hawa Bah. I was born in a small village named Fatako, in Guinea, West Africa. My given name was Adama Hawa Balde, but I changed it to Hawa Bah when we moved from the village to the city of Monrovia in Liberia, West Africa. This way it would be easy for people to pronounce and write.

I came from a large family;

my father was the village chief and the second villager to do business with the colonial French people. My mom was very hard-working, but sickly. This motivated me to work extra hard in my



Hawa Bah

business. As soon as I started making some money, I took her to Europe because of her sickness. Thank God, now she is eighty-eight years old and still very strong.

In my family we have an army general, navy people, farmers, businessmen and

(Continued on page 17)

My Immigrant Life (Continued)

(Continued from page 16)

women. The business people in the family had little education, but are the most successful financially.

I started my business at the age of twenty-four and created Shodmar Sr., which was named after my kids. My objective was to help not only my family, but the less privileged kids in the community and protect foreigners coming into the country to do business because they were being taken advantage of.

As with all parents, my life dream was to give my kids the best education. That was why I sent my

children, including my last born, to America for higher education. The biggest shock in my life was when I came to America to take my sick son to the hospital. When I called 911 to help me get him medical care, the police came and killed my son.

Since the killing, I have been working to get justice for my son. We are also asking the city to change their laws, so the same thing never happens to another family. When you call 911 for a sick family member, you deserve to get help not murder. Our city police should be trained to differentiate between a

sick person and a criminal. The police never let me talk to my son and said they were protecting me. I say, "Don't pretend that you love me more than I love myself. Follow the protocol."

I suffered so much because of this, and it took me over a year to get my life back together. I've been working with my community and lawyers to change the system in New York City, so that this doesn't happen to another family.

Point of View Letter— *The Most Beautiful Place in the World*

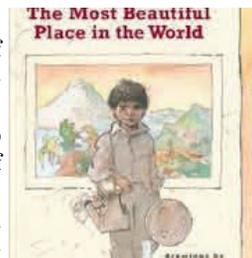
By Maquette Diop

Dear Juan's Grandma,

I'm writing this letter to inform you how I'm very proud of your grandson. When he started school after three months late, he really wanted to learn because he paid attention to everything we learned and did his best. That's why I want your permission to transfer him to the 2nd grade class.

Your grandson is very smart, sociable, and learns very fast, more than the oth-

er students who started at the beginning of the year and he surprises me every day. He could read and do arithmetic by himself before starting school. Then I think it's a tragedy if good students have to leave school and if you can't keep him in school. I would like to keep him there.



I'm so glad to inform you and I'm waiting for your response.

Sincerely,

Doña Irene

Point of View Letter (To My Son)

By Laila Nagi

Dear Son,

How are you, what are you doing now? Probably you're studying and helping grandma. I hope you're doing very hard work and studying. You thought that I forgot you and I'm selfish because I never came back to see you and I didn't ask you what you need.

My heart was always with you and I love you more than my other kids.

I had everything in my life, husband, children, house, but my life is not complete without you. That I feel everyday in my life.

One day I told my husband that I want my son to stay with us because I really missed you. Sometimes I cried inside my heart. Now he told me to bring you to my house to live with us forever.

Whenever I slept on that bed I thought

about you. Finally I will be coming next month to pick you up. You'll be in my house. You have to get ready to come with me, OK.

I will see you soon.

Sincerely,

Your Mom

The Advantages

By Oumar Goudiaby

Lamine was born in 1980 in America, a child of Senegalese immigrants. His parents gave him all the advantages to be happy. But Lamine never could keep these advantages because he made his parents angry every time; for example he never did his homework and failed in school. He never listened to his parents because perhaps he knew the American law about children.

When he was 12 years old, his parents decided to send him to Senegal for a vacation. Lamine was in Kognarou, my grandfather's village in Casantance, one of the regions of Senegal. When he arrived there, he first noticed there was no electricity. He started to worry. My grandfather was a strict and strong man. At 5:00 A.M., my grandfather awakened all his family people to pray and to prepare to go to work in the fields. In the way of the field, Lamine said to me, "Hey, Cousin, here everybody goes to work, even children?" I an-

swered him, "Yes, here everybody has to work for his own family." One day, my grandfather called and told him, "Come here, my grandson. You are very soft and you work slowly. What is happening? I know I have to send you to "Boukouté." "Boukouté" is a place where people send their sons to get experience to be strong men and to get good behavior with people, especially their parents. There in "Boukouté" there are no women, only men, and the new boys who need experience are taken care by the older ones. Sometimes, the older boys treat them very badly, even beat them to teach them submission and obedience to their elders including their parents.

After sending him there for about three weeks, Lamine came back to my grandfather's house to prepare to go back to America because his vacation was coming to an end.

When Lamine returned to his fam-

ily, his family noticed that he woke up early to pray, clean, and wash all the dishes in the kitchen. At school, Lamine now gets congratulations from all of his teachers because he does his homework well. One day, his mom said to him, "My son, what happened to you in Africa." He answered her, "Mom, I'm sure now that I know and understand what life is.

A piece of advice which I give to young people—hey, you should never abuse your advantages; use them in a good way. Listen to your parents because everybody who gives life wishes that his child becomes better than he. Today, Lamine is a successful, responsible businessman in an American company.

Double Entry Worksheet (One-Way Ticket)

By Stephanie Bere

Text

Page 1, paragraph 7

It was a hot day and the train was slow. There were seven people in the carriage. There was the man in the brown hat; the young man and his wife, Julie; a mother and two children; and a tall dark man in an expensive suit.

Reflection

This reminds me of my trip to Ivory Coast. I was with my family in the carriage about six people. It was very hot but very interesting. My little sisters were so excited. They stood on the seat to see outside the nature because they told me they wanted to know every town's name. It was the best trip for everybody.

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Change in Burkina Faso

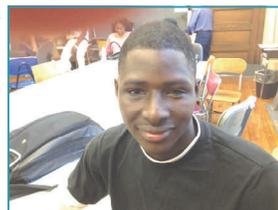
By Sam Pierre

Although a good head and good heart are good combination, but added with a tongue, we explain our thinking very well. My name is Sam Pierre; I was born in Ivory Coast, but my family was originally from the country of upright people (Burkina Faso). When I was twenty-four, I moved to Burkina Faso. A situation about which I felt deeply about and want to describe and improve is our school in Burkina Faso.

To begin with, in my country, the government used to close the residence halls of the university during the vacations. Indeed, they never warned the students before. After the closing, students who were staying needed a place to stay, so they could study for their assessments, which were to take place after the vacation. But they only warned the students three days before. And then, as we knew our rights, we refused to get out when they urged us, because we felt it was illegal. Moreover, being aware of the situation, we took some of the government vehicles to put in the yards of the four residence halls, hoping make negotiations easier with

them. Unfortunately, they refused the diplomatic voice and sent the police to make us get out by force. By the way, we fought with them, but we never won, because we were powerless people using stones while they used teargas.

For that, before we got away we destroyed the vehicles. Even though it is not good to destroy public goods, it is a way to show our displeasure. On August 1st, 2013, when I was in the sophomore year studying philosophy at the University of Ouagadougou, for the same reasons, they put thirty nine students in jail. I can say that I got lucky for not being a jailer. I was very upset and discouraged, because I became a refugee in my homeland. So, I lived with a person of good faith who received me as a guest. With the help of the human rights movement our friends were released on August 23, 2013. For all of this, we think that for the happiness of the people, the president mustn't be a candi-



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date for the election 2015. Being the president since October 1987, he has been a dictator and he has ignored the rights of the people. And he doesn't see the difference between what is wrong and right. Also, not only the students, but the people too are tired of his dictatorship. Let change the president now. Furthermore, in order to achieve our goal, two young musicians launched a popular movement discontent called "Citizen Broom." This movement forever with the tongue aims to make the public aware, and especially show young people that the change will not come from the sky, but we are the ones who can make the change be possible. We must fight for our rights, because the president wants to cancel the Article 37 of the constitution to stay in office.

To conclude, I can say that the philosopher Plato was right when he said in The Republic, "It should be for the happiness of states that philosophers were kings or kings were philosophers."