

2012 ABE Student Stories

Life...
We all have a
story, what
is yours?


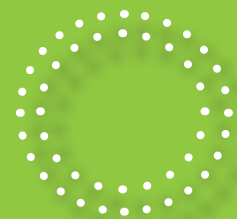
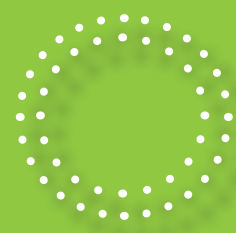
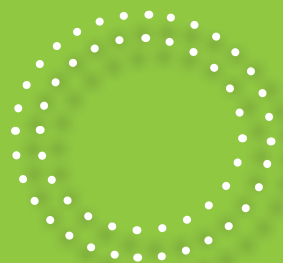
**Adult
Basic
Education**  Central Minnesota

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Abdinasir Tobe

My name is Abdinasir Tobe. When I was 6 years old I remember my first day of school in my country. It was very difficult for me to get up early the morning. I hated to go to school because I couldn't sleep late, but now things have changed. I like school.

I remember one story my dad used told me when I was a kid. The story was about two men, one of them was a rich man the other one was a poor man, but the rich man didn't have any education at all.

They traveled together one day. The rich man came to the poor man asked question.

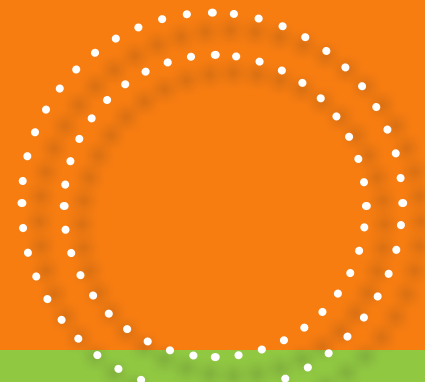
"Did you travel this way before?", the rich man said.

"No, it is my first time", poor man said. "Do you have enough money?" "No, I don't."

"Today you will lose half of your life because you have nothing to eat", the rich man said. After a little while the poor man saw water coming inside the boat. He came to the rich man and said: "Since we started our journey you questioned me

so I like to ask you one question. Do you know how to swim?" The rich man said: "No." "Today you will lose all your life! My parents didn't leave money for me but they gave me their knowledge and skills, my friend . The boat is going down and now your money will not save you today. Bye." said the poor man. The rich man was dead and the poor man survived. So any time I remember this story I like school more than anything because to have education is important

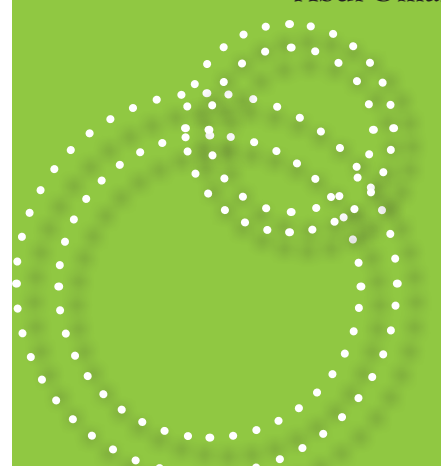
Abdinasir Tobe



Abdi Omar

My name is Abdi Omar I came from Somali Regional State in Ethiopia. I arrived in the U.S.A. on July 11th, 2008 in Washington D.C. After a few hours I came to the airport in Minneapolis. I stayed one hour then I came to St. Cloud. Here was my family. My first goal was how to find a job. After three months, I got a job. My second goal was to go to school and to learn to speak, write and read English. I started my first class at McKinley Adult Basic Education in Waite Park, MN. Now, I am better than before because the economy is strong in the United States. I work hard. I am more tired because I have to work a lot. In my country it is more difficult to find a job. I got used to America and I am happy to be with my family.

Abdi Omar



Ahmed Jama

When I first came to America I came to San Diego with my family .My family is 5 sisters and 2 brothers. I moved from San Diego to Kansas alone. Then, I started working and going to school and ESL classes. I took the bus to school. Then, my friend showed me how to drive a car. After that I bought a car and then I moved to Minnesota with my friend Omar and I still live in St. Cloud. Now, I am married to my wife. I have five kids and my kids go to school.

Ahmed Jama

My Story

My name is Akuay Gilo. I was born in Sudan. I grew up in Ethiopia. I have two sisters.

My sisters and I played, we swam in the lake. My mother taught us to cook. We lived in the same neighborhood. We ate together in the same neighborhood. My grandma and grandfather grew vegetables.

I went to school in Africa. I am learning English in school. I am married and have four children. I came to America in 1998. This is my story.

By: Akuay Gilo



Alaso Ali

I came to the US from Somalia four years ago. My family lives here in St. Cloud. I like my family because we are happy. I have 8 children. I like English class. I like my home in Somalia. I am happy.

Alaso Ali

April Bissell-Tucker

My name is April. I am 32 years old. I had 4 months left of my 12th year in high school in Long Prairie, MN. Because of health reasons and family issues I was told I couldn't catch up and graduate with my class, so I basically gave up on going back to school even though I wanted to.. It burned inside of me the urgency that grew year after year. It took 13 years of job searching and being over looked by almost all of the jobs I applied for. I kept telling myself oh, I will go back and never did anything about it until now. I have made mistakes and was separated from my kids. This is one of my number 1 reasons for me to do something with my life so I can be stable and get my family back and own my own business. I will eventually have something to hand down to my kids. Getting my GED is so important to me and I want thank all the teachers for all their support and positive reinforcement as well as my family and friends. Thank you.

By: April Bissell-Tucker

My Baby Shower

There is nothing more exciting than having a baby shower with your baby in your arms. Four years ago, my family and my husband were planning a baby shower party for me. They didn't tell me the day of the party so it would be a surprise for me. My baby was planning to give us another bigger surprise. On April 20th, the party was held for that day, The same day in the morning my sister came to my house early to invite me to church because she didn't want me to be in the house so my family and friends would have time to decorate it for the party. But while I was getting ready for church, I started having some contractions. I told my sister that I wasn't feeling okay, but she continued telling me that I had to get ready for church. She didn't pay much attention to that because my due day wasn't until May 2nd, so there wasn't any reason for these contractions. But suddenly, my water broke and my sister got

scared. Then she drove me to the hospital right away without paying attention to the traffic lights.

After we got to the hospital, the nurse started asking me the questions that they used to ask, but while she was talking I was pushing already, I didn't even heard was she was talking about, I told her that my baby was coming and she just said "No you have to wait for the doctor, he will be here in a little bit", But my baby couldn't wait. Three minutes later the nurse put me on a bed to get a little bit of relaxation, but ones I got on the bed my baby's head got out. Then when my sister saw it she helped me. I couldn't stop pushing. When the nurse saw that that the baby's head was coming out, she helped my sister to assist me. When the doctor got there my baby was already next to me. I will never forget that day, everything passed fast {in less than an hour}. By twelve, my sister in-law called me and they told me about the

party, that day they talked to one of the doctors and told him that they had planned a baby shower part; they very nicely said that we could borrow one of the rooms for the party. By two o'clock all my family was enjoying from the baby shower party. It is amazing how fast it happened, I didn't even had to use serum or any kind of medicine for the pain, In fact, I didn't even get tired for the labor. Everything was perfect. My little daughter gave me the biggest surprise. Now, she is four years old and every year in her birth day party everybody remembers that the first party that she attended was her baby shower party. She enjoys from looking at the pictures that my family took that day.

By: Antonia Gutierrez

Jawaa Hir

The best gift I ever received was in Kenya in August 2009. My father gave me a radio. It was the best gift before my trip to the U.S.A., all because my father loves me.

Jawaa Hir

Ashley Vogel

What I love about winter is the snow. It's so pretty and fun to play in. I also enjoy going ice fishing. These are some of favorite hobbies to do in the winter. I also love cooking and baking in winter for the holidays and for the cold days. It's nice to have some warm chili or homemade chicken noodle soup on a cool winter day. Especially having a glass of hot cocoa to warm you up when you come in from the cold. And so these are some of the things I like to do in the winter.

By: Ashley Vogel

My first time in Minnesota

Hello all, my name is Aruna Sir Nakka I came to the United States of America on Christmas Evening (De. 25th, 2007) for the first time with my husband. I landed in the Minneapolis airport at 6:30pm and got excited as I had never seen the snow in India in my life. We

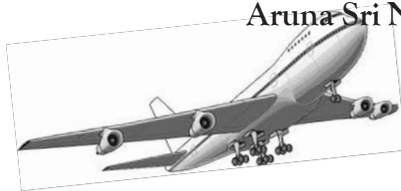


have been in St. Cloud from day 1 up till today and

we love this place, people and the culture. I never felt that I'm missing my parents, relatives and friends in India. We were blessed with 2 baby girls

Joshitha and Harshita here. We have visited all the state parks in Minnesota and the nearest lakes and we liked and enjoyed all of the places we have visited. We love all the seasons in Minnesota very much and I enjoy the fall colors, spring season, and snow in the winter and long sunny days at the lake in the summer. Now I and my kids are going to Discovery School for the Family Literacy program and I have confidence that I can read, write and speak English which will help me to communicate with the people and also to take care of my kids in the future as well.

Thanks to all
Aruna Sri Nakka



When My Mom Died

When I was a little girl living in Mogadishu, my mom died. She was shot by a militia for no reason at all. I was very sad but I coped with life without her. After that I came to Yemen in 1992. Life was hard. I then married and had 2 children but unfortunately 1 died at birth. After that I came to the United States in 2000 and have lived here until now.

By: Basra Hassan

Carolina Esquivel

Hello, my name is Carolina Esquivel and I am from Honduras. I was born in el Progreso yoro where I lived until I was 16 years old. My country is very beautiful and we also have a lot of bananas!! I came to live in the United States with my parents in 2001. My family and I lived in Sumter South Carolina. I liked living in Sumter, because the weather was always nice. We lived very close to Myrtle Beach where my family and I would often take a vacation. I met my husband at the place I was working at in Sumter. We dated for several years before we got married. I now live in St. Cloud, Minnesota, where I like it very much because it is a nice place to live. I take classes at Hands Across the World, so that I can better my English. They are very good people and I enjoy my time there

By: Carolina Esquivel

David Williams

I started off in Chicago, where I was born in Cook County hospital. We lived on the south side of Chicago. My sisters and brother and I were raised in the beginning of our lives in the projects. Later we moved to Mississippi where my mom and dad are from. My dad is from Holly Springs, Mississippi. It's a small town and home of Rush College, and all black college. It is the poorest college I have ever seen in my life. We lived in Holly Springs for quite some time where we farmed. It was real different from the big city. My dad and his family have 100 acres of land there. We went to School in another small town called Posse Camp, Mississippi. That is where I ran in the Junior Olympics. I won first place in the Sprint Race, second place in the Shot Put, and third place in the Long Jump. Down in the Delta, now that's where my mom's from, I love the Delta. She's from Arcola, Mississippi. It's a small town in Washington County. I use to go back there every February, that's when the sunshine is very nice. I have never been to a town where nearly everyone is kind of relation to you and I do mean that. We moved back to Chicago later in my life. As a teen, when I turned 18, I came to Minnesota.

David Williams

Living in Norway

I lived in Norway. I was a teacher in Norway. I helped the children learn the language of Somalia who are Norwegians. I was a teacher for three years. I taught ages 8 to 11. I would like to be a teacher here in the future.

By: Deeqa Ahmed



Fadumo Omar

It's my story about myself or I would like to talk about myself. My name is Fadumo Omar. I was born in the capital city of Mogadishu. In 1991, civil war started in our country. My family and I fled from the capital city to a small village. We lived in that village around ten years and did not have school. In 1999 I came to Kenya. Then I started in the Islamic school there. At the end of 2005, I came to the United States of America. Then I started working for the first three years. In 2009, I joined ABE/ESL school. So I want to continue my studies until I reach my goal. I wish my dream will come true. Thank you.

Fadumo Omar

Dyna Sok

My name is Dyna Sok and I am from South east Cambodia. In Cambodia is a small city called Pouthisat. There are many people in Cambodia. The population is about 15,000,000. I am from Phnom Penh the capital. Phnom Penh is in the east on the Mekong River. Phnom Penh is a big, busy city. Cambodia is hot in the summer and warm in the winter. The people in my country are busy, happy and friendly.

Dyna Sok

The house I grew up in

The house I grew up in was a wonderful place to live because it was big and beautiful house and it was located in west Mogadishu the biggest city in the country. It had wide streets and clean sand that looked like a dessert when you were walking you felt like it was snow on the road. It had fresh air and nice weather. The house faced to the east where two roads came together. Forty meters square was this house and was surrounded by trees and flowers. The house had six bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen and a small grocery store. The house was built with rocks and wood. Behind the front door was a kitchen, bathroom and a little room like a living room then another door that you could see inside the hallway. The bathroom was to the left of the living room. My family was small, two parents and three children but it was always very busy because of our business and relatives would come to visit us from different cities. We had fun with jokes, teasing and playing games. We would work together to support each other to become successful, it was a good environment and not stressful. There is another thing that I miss a lot is the food we use to eat together, I remember the smell of the flavorful smoke that fills the air as goat ribs, frying oil, rice and steak. It was a good time. Sometimes I wonder if I could go back to that moment and to taste that flavor once again. All the young women would rotate in the kitchen working together and serving the old people, all the men and children that was our respectful tradition. The business was booming and we had a lot of customers, because it was the only store in the area so during the day we could have up to 100 customers. Sometimes it

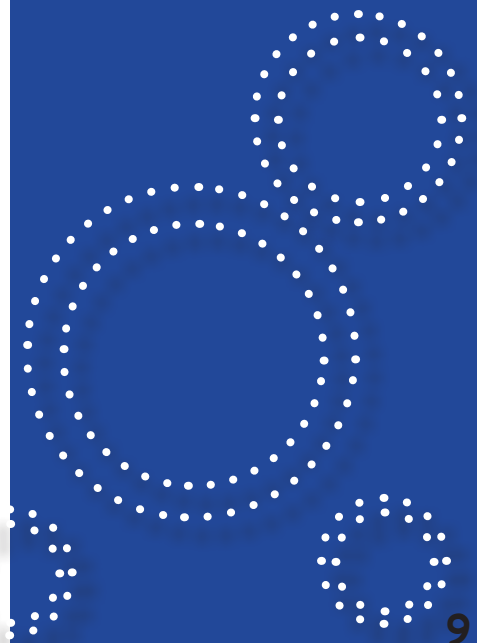
was hard to serve the customer. Then we would work together as a family. Sometimes I use to work as a cashier and my other two sisters would serve the customers. Whenever the customer needed help someone was there for them, sometimes we would help them carry their packages home. In the store we use to sell a lot of things like sugar, rice, oil, ice cream, pasta, flour, candy, books and pens. Whoever was free would help in the store since we would get busy all the time. Our parents always advised to help each other because if you don't help one another you will never be successful and that their business would collapse. We used to make sure we did the right thing in order for us to run our business and to have success. Lastly, I still remember how many friends and family who use to come and visit our house, we used to play, talk and solve problems together. I hope one day I will go back to my home country and see those friends again and have fun together. My house reminds me a lot of things that I will never forget our small store, customers, good neighbors and the parents who taught us how to get through. Sometimes when talking to my Mom we talk about the house, and tell each other stories. My Mom told me not to worry. God could allow us to one day go back to our home country and visit our house. I believe that it will happen someday with Gods plan and I trust him.

By: Barey Mohamud

Charles Burroughs

My name is Charles Burroughs and I always wanted to ride bulls. I was afraid to do it because I was raising two sons and I was scared I was going to get hurt and I wouldn't be able to take care of them. So I waited until they were in college and they could take care of themselves. It was 1986 and I was living in Oklahoma. My friend's dad asked me if I wanted to ride a bull and I said, "Yes." He said, "I can teach you." He put a barrel on a rope and said, "If you can stay on this barrel, you could ride a bull." He shook the rope. I stayed on for 8 seconds. I rode at least seven bulls and then I went to the championships in Las Vegas. When you ride bulls, you are competing with other riders for money and prizes. At the championships I won \$10,000.00. I rode for about two and a half years. Then one time a bull threw me and I was knocked out. My back and my wrist were injured. That's when I quit.

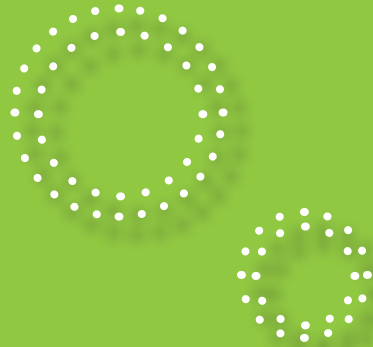
By: Charles Burroughs



Maribel Ramirez

Happiness is every morning
when I see my new day
Happiness is when I see my
beautiful kids
Happiness comes when I find
another chance to be better
Happiness is being happy with
whatever I have
Happiness is my life because I
love to be alive.

Maribel Ramirez



Halimo Budul

I came to the US from Somalia four years ago. My family lives in St. Cloud. I am single. I like my home in Somalia. I like my sisters and brothers. I like to go to school. I like speaking English. I have grandparents. I am from Somalia. I am happy today.

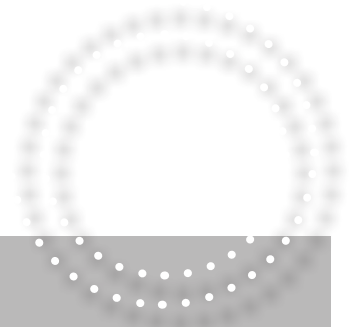
Halimo Budul

My Story

The favorite place I lived was with my mom in Africa. I liked it because there was no snow. I also liked it because there was rain and greenery. There were also many different kinds of animals.



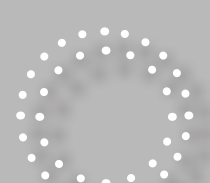
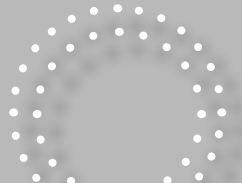
By: Masbal Ismail



Ma Elena Gutierrez

My name is Ma. Elena Gutierrez. I am 34 years old. I live in St. Cloud, MN. I came in 1995 to USA. I am, and grew up in a Catholic Family. I have a wonderful family and love all of them. A few years ago, I started to know the difficulties that immigrant communities suffer living in the USA. The arrest of a young Hispanic minor touched my heart. He was arrested without any reason, when he was in the parking lot of his apartment. After a few weeks, he was released from jail. He told me his story. "I was in the jail with adult persons accused of criminal offenses. They made me an example of my teens to see my age and took photos of me as if I was a criminal. I can't believe that this happened in the USA." When I heard this story, I decided to learn about the organization, Assembly of Civil rights and discovered that they lived sad stories much stronger than I ever experienced. The Assembly for Civil Rights is composed of people of faith and of different churches, seeking justice and liberation of immigrant families that have lived for years in the USA. The agenda for this year is a very busy one. This project is to organize and train people for registering Hispanics to vote. The assembly is advised by lawyers, in addition to having training for leadership in English and Spanish. My heart feels happy when we finish something and I am proud to be a member of this assembly. I am inviting any of you to become a member of the assembly. In this, you will feel as if you are apart of another family. Welcome!

Ma Elena Gutierrez



My Story

I live in St. Cloud Minnesota. I visit my family every weekend. My children go to school. I want to go to Somalia in the future. I am very busy every day. I love my family very much, they are special. I love my mother and father. I love my children with my heart. I love my teacher because I learn English. I like my friends. I love my husband because he is very special. I love my country and I love myself.



By: Farhiyo Jama

Sado Omer

My name is Sado and I have lived in three countries. I was born in Somalia into a big family. Because of the war, I went to live with my sister in Kenya. We both lived with our grandfather so we could help him. We all left Kenya to come to America. I think I was in Kenya for about ten years. I came to St. Cloud because I had a job here. I took care of children. I like my job because I love children.

Sado Omer

Halima Farah

I come from Somalia, I lived in Mogadishu. I have a big family. They're still in Africa. I miss them but I can talk to them on the phone. Some of my children are still in Africa. I live in St. Cloud but my daughter lives in Virginia. I came to America to see my daughter. There was a job for me in St. Cloud. I still work at the same job. I am very, very happy.

Halima Farah

Fartun Kahiye

My name is Fartun Kahiye. I was born in Mogadishu the capital of Somalia. I like my country because it has good weather and health and more animals. I lived in Somalia in a medium sized house until 2000. I have many brothers and sisters. I lived in Uganda for many years before I came to America. I came to America in 2011, so that I can get a good education, peace, health and a job. I need a good education because I want to be a doctor. I would like to go back to Somalia and help my people.

Fartun Kahiye

Israa Ismail

I am from Ogaden. I came to the United States in 2001. The first time I came to the US I came to Denver, Colorado. I lived there for one year and a half then I came to Minnesota in 2002 to St. Cloud. I started working at Electrolux for one year. I do not work there anymore. Now I stay home. My family lives in many different countries.

Israa Ismail

Juan Castro

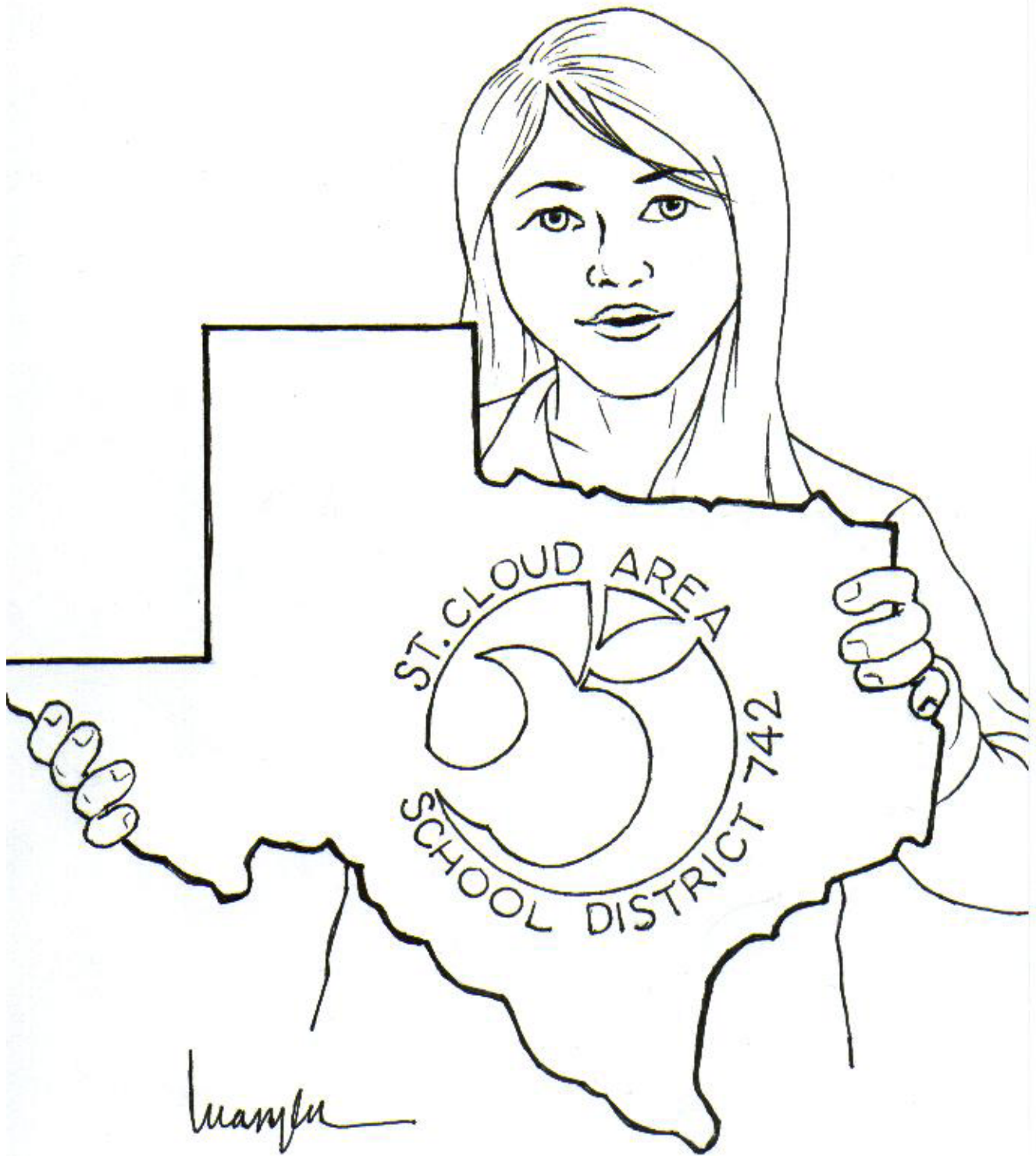
My name is Juan Castro. I was born in Mexico. I have good memories of my family my dad and my mother and brothers and sisters always talking and working. My father he was a farmer. My dad was very focused on cows and fields. I didn't like the life on the farm. I was educated in Mexico. When I was eighteen years old my first job was in the bank. I have a degree in accounting. When I was twenty two years old I moved to U.S.A. My first winter was in Washington. I cried and cried because I never saw snow. I missed my life with my parents. I love my country especially the food and friends. When I retire I will move back to Mexico. I miss Mexico a lot. A pleasure to write this story.

Juan Castro

Janet Schleper

I remember when I was a kid; my parents would play Santa Claus or Easter Bunny. My mother would say when the sun would go down, "Be careful, Santa Clause is watching you, you better behave" or "Santa is making cookies." I would set a plate of cookies and a glass of milk out for him and his reindeer. The next day the plate was empty and I was really excited. Now I am an adult and living on my own. I live in an apartment in St. Cloud and I had a job but I retired and went back to school instead of work and I really like it. I have a great teacher, her name is Lynn; she is a very good teacher to me. When I was a kid I really liked school so much that I count the days before school started again. When school was out for the summer I went to summer school. I am a person that loves school. I have 4 brothers, 3 sisters, 23 nieces and nephews, and 34 great nieces and nephews. I am the youngest of eight. When my parents passed away, my dad was 79 and my mom 96 years old. I love living on my own. I do my cooking, cleaning, baking and many, many other things in my life. I also do different classes through Project Challenge and they are really fun. I meet so many different people and I like it. I get up every morning, say my prayers, and then have breakfast and go to school Monday through Thursday. I have a computer class every Monday and Wednesday afternoon and it's really fun.

Janet Schleper



Something I will never forget

My name is Jyoti Panthania, I am from India. I want to share one of the incidents of my life which is unforgettable. It happened when I was in Tokyo (Japan) with my husband and one-year old daughter. We planned to return to India, so we packed 6 bags of luggage. In Tokyo, the metro train is the most common and best way of transportation (car, bus, taxi for local areas).

In Narita Airport, we had to change two trains. When we boarded the first train, we kept one bag on the shelf but we forgot to get it down for the next train. We almost forgot about the bag and after 5-10

minutes, I suddenly found one bag was missing. I told my husband but he said if it's a bag of clothes then forget it, buy more clothes. But after 5 minutes he checked that we missed our electronics bag having handi camera, digital cam, laptop cables and a tripod stand. Then he went to the co-pilot of the train but it was very hard to tell the problem because Japanese people don't understand English. Somehow we got 2 words from the co-pilot airport and a complaint. We almost lost hope for the bag. That time we were so tense because in the next hour we had to check-in the luggage and find the office also. We reached the office but had the same problem how to explain. My husband drew a picture and gave time of the trains. They got the idea and in 10 minutes they found that our bag was still in the train and safe. At that time we couldn't collect the bag because our flight was about to leave. They said we would get our bag at the airport when we came back. After a month my husband got the bag with everything in it. After this incident we believe that Japan is safe and the people are honest, and helpful too. We'll never forget Japan and the incident.



By: Jyoti Pathania

Muhammed Sugaal

My name is Muhammed Sugaal. I want to share a little bit about my life. I was born in Somalia in the city of Mogadishu. In my whole life I worked with my family, especially my father and my mother. When I came to America everything was different – the weather, the housing, the people and city streets. I worked for a Minnesota company for eight years. When I found this job I decided to move to St. Cloud. The company name is Electrolux. Some people worked more than forty years at this company. In conclusion: This was the most difficult time in my life and am looking forward to my future.

Muhammed Sugaal

Story By: Kim Song Tann

My name is Kim Song Tann. I left my country Cambodia and city Sisophon. I came to America eleven years ago with my family. I was happy and sad. I have 6 people in my family, two sons and two daughters and my wife. My wife goes to work every day. I go to school every day because I do not have a job. My daughter goes to school and also works, and so does my son.

My family now lives in Sartell in a house. After school I go home and clean up the house. Sometimes I watch TV.

I sometimes work in the garden and go places in the neighborhood. I like my neighborhood.



By: Kim Song Tann

My experience in Family Literacy Program

My name is Jyoti Pathania, I am from India. I want to share my experience in the FLP (St. Cloud) but before that I'd like to Thank God (who brought me in to this world), my parents, (who gave me birth), my husband Anil – to whom I am married, and my daughter Manyata, teachers in India and to FLP teachers. I have learned a lot from this program, I am able to speak English well, understand the child development and have met so many classmates from different countries. I joined this class in September of 2011. From the first day until now, I have learned so much from my wonderful teachers. It's an unforgettable experience of my life, I always will be thankful to them. Teacher Nicki, helps and takes care of our kids during our English class. She is a very creative and patient teacher. We have learned a lot of rhymes, activities and indoor games. Teacher Lissa discusses our parenting problems; we also have done some volunteer work and activities that we enjoy a lot. She is a great help. Teacher Joe and Deb help a lot in learning English, they start from basics and teach in a very interesting way. Now, I realized English is an interesting subject. Teacher Lynn helps a lot with computer skills, also with getting a job. She introduces so many internet sites

which help me and my family. I am learning typing and she is always ready to give kind advice or help. The teachers are doing such noble work without taking a penny from the student's. They really have changed my life and other student's too. I can't give them anything in return. I just pray to God, that all their dreams come true, bless America and the world.

By Jyoti Pathania

Jyoti Panthania

A Teacher is like a candle which burns itself and gives light to others.

By Jyoti Pathania

Ladan Omar

I came to the United States from Somalia two years ago. I live in St. Cloud and I have 5 children. I go to school I have work. I like my life. It is very good. I live in an apartment with 3 bedrooms

Ladan Omar

Khadra Ali

I know one person who has serious diabetes. That person was my English teacher. Her name is Asia. She was my teacher when I lived in the United Arab Emirates. She was a very nice teacher and very beautiful, but her problem was diabetes. She was overweight and she could not control herself. She ate everything such as sweets, rice and pasta. She took medication, and then as her last chance she took injections. She started exercising. Every morning she walked. One day I was waiting for the bus at school. She said, "Come on, walk with me to Miss Hamda's house and we will get on the bus." I said, "OK, deal." We started to walk. When we were on the highway, she fell down. She couldn't get up. She said, "Please help me." I just screamed, "Come on, get up!" We were on the highway. The cars stopped because there was a red light. I said, "If the red light changes I will run away from you." She said to me, "Please give me your hand." I said, "Oh my God, you are very heavy. Why did you eat a lot of food? I can't help you and I want to run away from here. Then I will call an ambulance for you to take you to the hospital." The care sent beep bee! Finally she got up. We ran away together. When we crossed the street she hugged me and said to me, "thanks you for the help."

Khadra Ali

Obstacles

In my life I've had many obstacles. When I was nine years old we went to Kenya with my older sister. My mom and my other sister were back home. So when we came to Kenya, I told my sister to take me to school but she said "no", because I had to stay home to cook for the kids. I was so sad but didn't have a choice but to do what she told me. I felt I was just a homemaker until this day I have hated her for that. Then I came to the United States to Atlanta, GA. I was sixteen years old so they told me that I was under age. I couldn't work so I had to go to school.

I was very excited to go to school and without knowing any English and not knowing letters or sounds was very hard for me. I didn't know what to do, I used to cry because, I was so sad.



People around didn't know what I was going through. They just thought that I was lazy but I wasn't. I went to school but wasn't learning anything. All that I wanted was to be around people. My family wasn't around. My family wanted me to work but I wanted to learn. I didn't have any encouragement, I felt so empty, I didn't learn much and I had to quit school to go to work. Then I learned how to drive and I bought a car. I helped my family and I never forgot the guy who taught me how to drive. I had so many obstacles but I'm so grateful because I wouldn't be who I am today. Now, I have two kids that I adore. They are so special; I would do anything for them. My son is five years old and my daughter is three years old. My son is in kindergarten now and I told him that he needs to take studies very seriously. I don't want my son to go through what I have been through. I give him encouragement that he needs. I go every Friday to his school and I ask his teacher how is he doing? I also volunteer at his school, and to see how he is doing. I take my son's education very serious and I hope he does too.

By: Muna

Miguel Torres

I worked at Stearns, Inc. in Sauk Rapids for 17 years. I started working in 1991. My job title was Lay-up Bundling. I worked for 7 years on the 1st shift. In 1997 they said that there was not enough work for 3 shifts. We were 17 people and the supervisor. They moved us all to the second shift. During those years I was happy working and I had about 8 supervisors, during those 17 years. They were good for me because I learned a little bit from my supervisors. I learned something different from each one of my supervisors. In my first year I did work in different departments and after one year I started as a Lay-up Bundler. During the 17 years that I worked there I was glad because I did like my job very much. Every time that I had an interview, my supervisor said that my job was excellent. I always had good communication with my supervisors and my co-workers. During those years I made many friends. But in 2008 the economy went bad, hundreds of people lost their jobs. And I was one of them. Even to this day 2 years later, I am still without a job. I feel a terrible destructive change in my life.

Miguel Torres



Madina Mohamud

I came to the US from Kenya one year ago. I live in St. Cloud. I have nine children. I go to class at school. I came here with my children I live in an apartment. I am unemployed. That is my problem. I was a midwife in Somalia and Kenya for eight and a half years. I want a job.

Madina Mohamud

Special Day for my children

I am so happy on this month, because it is a special day for my children. Melissa and Lucky were born in the same month, but different days. Lucky was born 3-17-1994. He is eighteen years old now. The special thing is he will graduate high school this year



too. He is very happy. He got up early and went to buy some cup cakes to bring for his teacher and his friends in the class. Lucky has a lot of friends in the school. Melissa was born on 3-17-2000. She now is 12 years old. She is very happy and very

excited too. She is in the 6th grade this year. I am so glad for my son, because Lucky is making plans. He will go into to the Army after he graduates this year. If he can do it, I will be so very happy.

By: Nancy S.

Omar Mohamed

The first time I came to America my sister welcomed us in Washington D.C. My sister said, "This is my good place." My brother-in-law helped us a lot of the time. I started school in Washington D. C. My favorite thing about America is education my teacher said, "Welcome to America." I was very happy. After that I started work and school. My sister said, "I need you to work hard. I don't like you to be lazy. Omar, be a good man and be nice to everybody." I moved to Minnesota in the millennium because my friends moved to Minnesota. The most difficult thing in Minnesota is the weather. Thank you so much.

Omar Mohamed

A Real Story

I would like to share with you a real story. I worried about not coming to school because my lovely wife was pregnant, nine months and some days. I have one son, Alhamdu Lilaah. It means "thank God." My son stayed with his grandmother. We went to the St. Cloud Hospital for help December 1st around 3:00 p.m. They gave us the Intensive Room. Obstetricians and nurses were there. Nurses were coming every 15 minutes. They were helping us in the perfect way. They gave my wife and intravenous drip (IV) to give birth. One of the nurses got a bed and said, "The umbilical cord is coming. They want an operation room". I remained in the same room. I asked Allah to save them both. One of the nurses came to me. She said, "Go to room 329." I said OK. I went to 329. Another nurse came with my beautiful baby daughter. I said to her, "thank you for bring my daughter. Where is my wife?" She said, "She is coming." When she came, she was numb and wearing a mask. I don't want to prolong my story. I never thought I was going to miss my lovely classmates and my respectful teacher Deb. Thank you for giving me your time.

By Mohamed Abdi

Grandmother

My grandmother got the education from childhood. When she grew up at that time, girls didn't have the opportunity to receive an education. Because her father was a teacher and her grandfather was a lawyer, they believed that women should have education too. She could write calligraphy with both hands, she could compose poems.

When she married, she was very rich. She never had to work or do chores. My grandfather was a



landlord. He owned a lot of land and houses. During the Cultural Revolution, the family properties were confiscated by the government. So the family became poor. Grandmother had 6 children, but 2 of them died. Soon after, my grandfather died. My grandmother did not have any complaints. She had the courage to face the problems and adapt to the present life. She did housework and learned to sew, working as a tailor to earn money to support her family. In my memory, I never saw my grandmother angry, speak loud, or quarrel with someone. She seldom mentioned things of the past, only said that people should look forward. She was diligent, hard-working, but also she kept up with the times and enjoyed the rhythm of life. She was not stubborn. She had the courage to accept new ideas, she liked listening to the radio news. When her children or grandchildren had a problem, we liked to talk to grandmother because she was very good at explaining things and she was very wise. She died when she was 91 years old. Before her death, her mind was still clear and smart, and her clothes were very clean. She is my role model. I loved her very much. Although she died, she still lives in my memory. When I talk about her, I feel happy.

By: Yan Fang Ren

Coming to America

America is a good place to be learning many things. Go to school and have your dreams in your hands for your own life forever. Many immigrants don't know that going to school is good for them. Some

of the immigrants do know that it is important to go to school and to have something for you is very important for all immigrants. I encourage everyone to move forward. Working to have money is good, but learning something first is better. Our kids like to go to school to learn many things from their teachers and their friends. All the kids learn quickly from each other both good and bad, they may not know what is bad for them. As parents need to watch our kids closely because they may get into trouble at school or anywhere and that is not good for them. They have many opportunities to learn good things and not the bad things. This is very important for all kids to learn, especially the immigrant children.



By: Ablavi Akpeko Ocloo

I came to America 16 years ago

I came to America 16 years ago. I said good-bye to my relatives. My relatives cried, they told me good-bye. I was afraid in the airplane. My kids cried in the



airplane. I didn't go back to my home country in 16 years. When I came to America I was happy. I was comfortable when I came to America. I love my fam-

ily so much. I love my brother mother and sister. My mother lives in Sudan now. I love my home and children. I love my friends. I love my teacher and students in class. I love Saint Cloud so much.

By: Nyathol Pathe

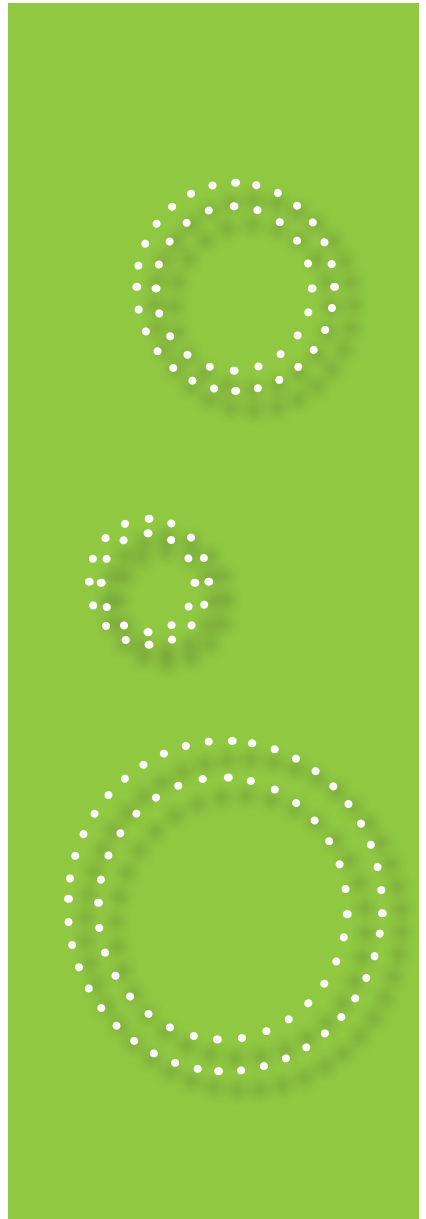
Muna Yusuf

My name is Muna Yusuf, I came in 2000 from Kenya. When I arrived I landed in Mexico, I don't remember the city. It was arranged by someone in Kenya to arrive in Mexico. I was given a slip and the next day I left. At the time my daughter was only 4 months old and I was scared since it was just her and me. We landed in Mexico at night. We only stayed in Mexico one day. The next day we got into a car with someone I never met, but they were Somali people, and we drove and drove until we reached San Diego, CA. we stayed in San Diego for about a week. We then boarded a train bound to Philadelphia, PA. My sister has friends there. And we stayed with them. I applied for a I-90 in New Jersey, they denied me and told me to go away. Then I left I went to San Diego. There I made my 1st appointment to get my green card, they told me to come back in a year. I stayed in San Diego for about 2 months and again I took my daughter with me back to Philadelphia. I stayed with my sister's friends for about a month. My sister's friends



decided to move to Marshall, Minnesota so we took a bus a long drive. I stayed just about a Year in Marshall. I went back to San Diego for my court date to get my I-94. The lawyer came all the way from New Jersey to my court date in California to try and deny my I-94. But the Judge in California was very nice to me. And she approved my I-94 she believed in me. I came back to Marshall, Minnesota to start my life.

Muna Yusuf



When I came from Bangladesh

I came from Bangladesh on July 28th, 2011. It was my first visit to the U.S. I was amazed at everything I saw around me. After a few days, I began to feel that the U.S.A. is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. When I was young I had a dream that I would go to America one day. I live in Minneapolis. I am looking for a job. I have applied to some places but everywhere they ask for work experience. I came to this country only a few months ago, how can I get work experience if no one hires me? But soon I began to see people who are working this country, people like me who do not speak



English well and do not have any work experience. I understand that is easy to get a job when you know someone in the company or place where you want to work. Finally, I thank the U.S. government for building Adult Basic Education center in many states around the country. This program is important for people like me who are new in the country. I think that the Adult Basic Education centers teach students very nicely and with care.

Story by: Naznin Sultana

Phat Le

“American philanthropists” were the American troops that I met when I was young as well as the teachers who help me now that I am an old man.

Although today the American economy is so rough, the U.S has been generous helping the new immigrants and creating a



lot of good opportunities to help them fit into their new country, especially in education. I have been in the U.S. for twenty months. I have been learning English from the beginning when I just came to the U.S. I learned English in Tacoma Community House in Washington for six months, then I went to New York to look for a job. At the same time I attended an ESL class at OCM Board of Cooperative Educational Services. Now I have been learning English at St. Cloud Adult Education Center. My new school is a good place to learn English, better than either Tacoma Community or OCM BOCES. The class is held two sessions a week, two hours a session, but this class is enough for students to comprehend their lesson perfectly and have a lot of time to practice their English skills themselves. My school has a good reputation with qualified instructors and compassionate tutors. My new school has a modern computer lab. There are a lot of grammar, reading, listening, and knowledge programs set up to help students have a lot of opportunities to practice their English skills. The computer lab is open every day from morning to evening and teaches students directly on the computer. The teachers and tutors are always

present in the computer lab to help students when they are faced with any trouble. You should come to the computer lab to strengthen your computer skills. My tutors are very patient with me. They correct me in conversation and explain to me any words I can't understand the meaning. I can ask them about American culture, American idioms, and especially how to get a job in the U.S. I have a lot of experience

working in my country but I don't have any experience working in the U.S. Last month I got a job in a company but I only worked for six days and I was fired from this company. I got stressed, I slept with one eye open, I lost my own enthusiasm although I am not a pessimist. My teachers taught me to cope with stress by thinking positive thoughts in the future and by understanding that failure is the mother of success. I have gotten a lot of help from my new country. Through thick and thin I still try to find a job. I love my new country. The pictures in my mind of my old teachers and my new teachers are the picture of the U.S. for me. I always miss my old teachers. I appreciate the help from both my old teachers and my new teachers who are “American philanthropists.” Thanks for your help.

By: Phat Le



A favorite place



My favorite place to live was with my family in Vermont. My children helped with my money. Vermont has good Chinese food. Vermont also has a good bank. Vermont is very green, with lots of grass. I learned English there. I shopped in Vermont. I also like living in St. Cloud.

By: Ruqiya Ali

My favorite Place



My favorite place is Laos. Laos is beautiful. I like Laos because there is a lot of very good nature. I like Laos because my family and my friends are there. I like Laos because of the Mekong River. I like Laos because of its food. I liked going to college there. If I had a vacation, I would go to Laos.

By: Phitsamay

Rosa Herrera

My name is Rosa Herrera. I am 23 years old and I have 3 kids named Joseluis, Jaquelin and Sergio. Joseluis is 8, Jaquelin is 5 and Sergio is 3 years old. Life hasn't been very good for me because since I was 9 years old me and my brother and sisters were taken away from my Mom for almost 2 years. When she got us back we went to live with her in Austin, MN. Then we came to live in St. Cloud, MN in 1998. In 2000 we had to move to Avon, MN into a new place because my mom lost her job and home we were living in. We moved to Fresno, CA for 9 months. We moved back because my kids Dad got a job in St. Cloud in a factory. We were staying with some friends, but then we had to move out because they were moving away. We didn't have anywhere to go so we had to stay with my kid's dad's uncle. We could only stay there for 2 weeks. We were homeless for about 2 weeks until we found a trailer in St. Cloud with my kid's dad's cousin. We lived there for 3 years with them. In 2006 I had my daughter Jaquelin, then in 2008 I had my son Sergio but before I had my last son Sergio I was having problems with their dad. So when my son Sergio was 5 months old I left their dad because he was doing some bad stuff. When I left him, I lost my trailer. I had no place to live and no money, no food. My sisters helped me out when they could. I was so stressed out I didn't know what to do. Sometimes I wanted to give up but my kids gave me the strength to keep going. I was homeless for about a year and a half, until I found this nice guy named Juan. He helped me out. I had a place to live, food and he helped me with my kids to get them in school, take them to their doctor's appointments, etc. I am so thankful that I met him. Now I have a stable place and I am very happy, but sometimes I still have some problems but I keep trying to be happy.

Rosa Herrera



Sonja Katzenberger

My name is Sonja I'm 23 years old and I ended up dropping out of school when I was 16 years old. Eventually I had two kids my son Peyton who's 4 and my daughter Savanna who's 2. After I had my kids I decided to go back to school and get my GED because I want my kids to know later in life that it's important to get their education. So here I am today getting my GED to make a better life for my family and I. Also, I would like say thank you to my family and friends for your support and thank you to all the teachers that were there to help along the way.

Sonja Katzenberger



My History

Hi, my name is Shamsu Abdullahi. I came to the US in 2003. At that time, I was 39. I have lived in the U.S. for 8 years with my husband. Also, I have 7 kids, and my littlest son Abdirahman was only a baby. Saia and Nimo help me a lot. They are very clever. Now it's 2012 and Nimo is 11, Sadia is 9, Abdiaziz is 7 and Abdirahman is 6, and I am 47.



One of my favorite places to live is LaCruz. Why do I like that place? I like LaCruz, because my children go to school. I also go to school at night at LaCruz. I like LaCruz because I have many friends there. My neighborhood is good.

This is my history, and thank you for reading.

By: Shamsu Abdullahi



What I did during Spring Break 2012

During spring break I went to Madison, Wisconsin with my friend. He lives there but is in St. Cloud going to the technical college.

His wife stays in Madison while he is attending college. We left St. Cloud in a rented car at 2:00pm. We drove for three hours before stopping at a rest area for prayers. We arrived in Madison in the evening.



When we arrived at his wife's house she was very surprised to see us as she wasn't expecting our visit. After a short visit we went to the Mosque to pray. Then we visited some friends. After visiting for a while my friend and I explored downtown Madison. We saw the Wisconsin Capital building and all the areas around it. Then we went to a restaurant and had some ice cream, and then we went home and went to bed.

By: Sentur Rabbi



God is Powerful

When I was one month of pregnant, I became sick. I was going to visit my mom a Douala, the economic capital of my country. Once at the clinic, the gynecologist decided to do an ultrasound to me because I had a stomachache. Ultrasound showed me that I had two pregnancies, one ok and another one not so good. The gynecologist told me that I must undergo an operation to evacuate the bad pregnancy and save the good one. But he lied about it. The operation would be fatal for my baby. When I got back to my hospital room, I took out my Bible, I prayed and I read it. I ask the Lord to come and protect my baby. He's one of the best of doctors. He does not allow that I lose my pregnancy because the child growing inside me it is by his grace and he would act on my behalf

so that this child can be a living testimony of his omnipotence. After one week in the hospital, I went back in Yaounde, capital city of my country, where I lived. Once arrived, I met another gynecologist, one of the greatest in my country. My pain was so great. I did another ultrasound and then, no one saw the baby. This doctor didn't understand how, because he saw the picture of my first ultrasound. However, he forbade me to travel in the following days because I had a serious problem with my pregnancy. But, my ticket was already bought and I was traveling in three days. Again, I was hospitalized. My last infusion was over a few hours before my departure for the airport. On the plane, I continued to pray. When I arrived in the US, the next day, I went to the clinic because my

pain persisted. The same day I made an ultrasound after I've told them what was happening until then. Glory to God, the ultrasound showed only a single pregnancy and my baby was in perfect shape. Today, she's a big girl of 16 months and is so happy smiling and so beautiful. The Lord is wonderful and I will never say enough thank yous for all these kindnesses and graces.



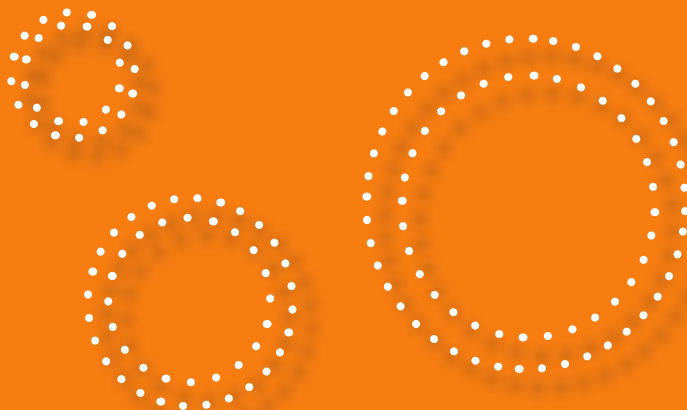
By: Sylvie

In Egypt

My favorite place I have lived was Egypt. I liked Egypt because it was safe. The people were nice. I liked the good weather. I lived there for 2 years. I made some friends. I lived in the city of Cairo.



By: Surer Ibrahim



My Story

I am Swabra. I am 20 years old. I was born in Somalia; but I have never seen Somalia, because after two months my family and I left. There was a civil war and a lot of violence.

I grew up in Kenya. I only spoke one language until I came to the United States. In the US, I learned how to speak English, which is my second



language. I came from a refugee camp. I didn't know how to speak English when I first got to America. I didn't like America until I adapted to it. I find that a better life living in the United States is being more grateful for the small things than the bigger stuff. They just seem to show up from unexpected sources; and I am always looking forward to each day with all the surprises that keep coming my way.

By: Swabra Hassan

Huda Kareem

I remember when I was a kid; my parents would play Santa Claus or Easter Bunny. My mother would say when the sun would go down, "Be careful, Santa Clause is watching you, you better behave" or "Santa is making cookies." I would set a plate of cookies and a glass of milk out for him and his reindeer. The next day the plate was empty and I was really excited. Now I am an adult and living on my own. I live in an apartment in St. Cloud and I had a job but I retired and went back to school instead of work and I really like it. I have a great teacher, her name is Lynn; she is a very good teacher to me. When I was a kid I really liked school so much that I count the days before school started again. When school was out for the summer I went to summer school. I am a person that loves school. I have 4 brothers, 3 sisters, 23 nieces and nephews, and 34 great nieces and nephews. I am the youngest of eight. When my parents passed away, my dad was 79 and my mom 96 years old. I love living on my own. I do my cooking, cleaning, baking and many, many other things in my life. I also do different classes through Project Challenge and they are really fun. I meet so many different people and I like it. I get up every morning, say my prayers, and then have breakfast and go to school Monday through Thursday. I have a computer class every Monday and Wednesday afternoon and it's really fun.

Huda Kareem

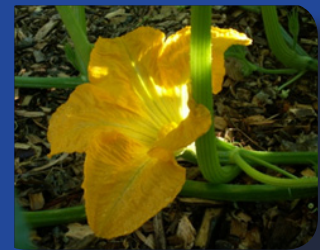
My Angels

My life is very wonderful, but the most wonderful thing about it is my two daughters. The oldest one's name is Thao Vu; she is 15 years old and the little one's name is Tho Vu, she is 11 years old. They both are very lovely and friendly girls. At school, they are also very good students. That is why I am proud when they come home from school and show me their perfect grades. At home, they are docile and funny daughters. Now, this is the best part. I am always tired from work and to have daughters to cheer me up, that makes me happy. I always take care of them and they show me their love by taking care of me back. We always have a good time when I stay at home from work. I love both of my little girls. I would be sad if I did not have them. They are my world. They are my angels.

By: Luan Vu

Immigrating to America from Uganda!

At a young age, I would work at a hotel to help my family financially. I was about 16, I went to school and then to work. At this time the Somali government was very unstable and we knew we couldn't stay any longer. When the civil war broke out, my father, mother and siblings immigrated to Kenya. I was 20 years old. My father brought us to Kenya. He worked to help us live a good life, he then went to Somalia and was killed on his way back to Kenya because he had money and was a well known business man. This happened in 1994. We heard the news while living in Kampala, Uganda. We would get financial aid from the U.N. and that is what we lived off of. I then met my husband in 1995 and married him in January of 1996. I had my oldest daughter in 1997, my second child - Ahmed in 1999, Amin in 2001, Suad in 2003. While pregnant with Samira, I got very ill and eventually got better and had a healthy delivery. It was time to leave Uganda and the refugee camps and go to America for a new beginning and opportunity. We landed in Michigan in January of 2006. We left there because there weren't a lot of job openings. We came to St. Cloud, Minnesota in May of 2006 and started a new life. My husband found a job here and we settled down. I had my youngest son, Zakaria on December 20, 2006. This is my story.



By: Hodan Obsiye



