

2011



Voices of Literacy, Volume 20



May 25, 2011

Thomas Crane Public Library

Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts -

Quincy



**Student Journal 2011 is dedicated to the
memory of Anne Powers.**



(Photo courtesy of the Patriot Ledger)

Anne Powers was a great friend of LVM-Quincy for many years. With a love for reading and a masterful way with words Anne was an avid reader, a tremendous scrabble player and a clever crossword puzzler. Our program benefited from Anne's support in many ways.

Her belief in the value of reading and literacy was reflected in her support of LVM-Quincy and the enthusiastic participation of her family. Over the years she and her daughters, Nancy and Mimi, and countless family friends played scrabble, unscrabble and trivia at our annual fundraisers – none of which were complete without her made-from-scratch chocolate chip cookies. Her son John was a judge at the spelling bee and her daughter Nancy was a volunteer tutor and LVM-Quincy Advisory Board member for many years.

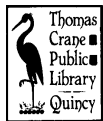
Anne Powers was a dedicated friend of literacy, a word lover and an advocate of the written word who lent her support to ensure that adult's have the opportunity to learn to read.

Thank you, Anne.

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Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts – Quincy is a library literacy program that provides free, private, one-on-one tutoring in basic reading and writing to adults on the South Shore. Founded by Ann McLaughlin in 1985, it is one of thirteen LVM programs statewide and an accredited affiliate of Pro-Literacy America.

This journal is dedicated to the readers and writers
who chose to speak on these pages, who willingly
shared stories of struggle and success to inspire us all.



THOMAS CRANE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts-Quincy
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thomascranelibrary.org/read



MY TUTOR IS HELPING ME

I am here to better my spelling and reading so I can open the door to another world that I have been missing.

My relationships with women did not last long because of my lack of education. The women in my life thought I needed them more than they needed me.

I owned an antique and upholstery shop and I was very good at it. But I had to count on other people to do my paperwork and they took advantage of me all the time.

I relied on my kids too much to help me with reading and spelling. It pushed them away from me.

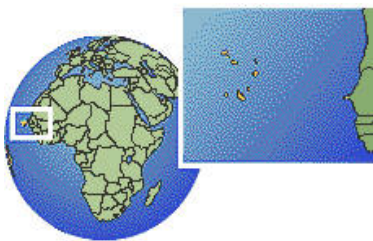
I am feeling much better with myself now that I am working towards a better education. I can be more independent in my business and in my relationships with my friends and family. We will all have more respect for one another.

By Julius

MY FIRST JOB IN CAPE VERDE

My first job was at Toyota Motors in Cape Verde when I was twenty-one. I worked as a customer service representative. I answered the phone and ordered parts on a computer. I liked my job very much because I could use my first language (Portuguese Creole) and help people. I worked for four years at this position.

I found working in my country more relaxing than working in the United States. The transportation was convenient because the company took us to work and brought us home on a minibus. Also I liked the two hour break we had during the work day because I could eat my lunch at home and get some rest. Some people actually went to the beach during their break. My first job wasn't so stressful because I could speak Portuguese, the transportation was provided and I had a two hour break during the day.



By Liliana

READING HAS CHANGED MY LIFE

My whole life has changed. I'm happy today because I'm getting educated. I am working with a tutor and learning a lot every day. Since I began I have accomplished so much.

Before I would go to the store and I wouldn't know how to pick out cards, but now I know what card to pick out. In the past I would not know how to read and I would pick any card. Sometimes it would be the wrong card. This would make me feel embarrassed. Now I can read and send cards. I feel like I am in society where I can make my own decisions and be independent.

In the past, I wouldn't talk much to anyone. I didn't want anyone to know I couldn't read or write. A fellow said to me once, "The less you say, the less people will judge you". I was in a shell for a long time. Once I gained the confidence, I began to blossom. Now I talk to anyone. Now I can fill out an application. Now I can take tests on the computer. Now I can write and send letters to all my friends.

I survived because I never told anyone that I couldn't read. Now I can stand proud. Being educated is a lucky thing. I've gained so much by being in this program. Now I notice the world much better. I am more alert. I read the newspaper. I read

headlines. I look at pictures and who created them. I'm walking up the stairs now and taking every step I can to learn.



By Billy

WHY SHOULD YOU READ EVERYDAY?



It is important to read every day. When you read a book, it helps you to become familiar with words. Reading a book helps you widen your vocabulary. The more vocabulary you know, the more you understand. When you read a lot, you converse better.

When you make yourself read every day, it makes you a more fluent reader. It also helps you to see the words so you can know how to spell them. When you read fluently, it help you to read more quickly.

I have seen improvement in my reading over the years because I try to read something every day. As a result, my reading has become stronger and my sight words have become more familiar.

So, if you are discouraged with reading, don't give up! Try to read a little each day and it will go a long way! Before you know it, you'll be reading a lot better than you expected.

By Laura



My name is Maria and I was born in Guatemala, which is called the City of Eternal Spring. I have a big family, three brothers and two sisters. I moved to the United States about 25 years ago and it has been a blessing to live in this country all of these years. I got married in this country too and I have 2 beautiful children.

At this moment I am working with a foster child and it has been a real challenge. You learn how to love a child that is not yours. In time they become part of your own family and we become their family too.

I want to continue studying and going to school so I can get my GED. I wasn't able to get my high school diploma when I was younger. My passion is to help people to have a happy family and to help my kids to grow up healthy and become good citizens. I want them to be proud and accomplish things in all areas of their lives.

By Maria

FISHING



Fishing is so good for the mind.

Especially on a rainy day, they bite really well, because they think no one is going to get them.

Throw the rod out, watch for the bobby to go under, then wind, wind, wind as fast as you can, snatch it and bring the fish up. You've got a jumpy fish.

I can remember when the whole family was there one day: my son and daughter, her boyfriend, who drove us all, and my 2 granddaughters. We were all together, and the pond was so quiet, it was good for the mind and relaxing for the soul.

And everyone caught a fish. It made my day.

By Sharon T.

MY THREE SONS

I am proud of my three sons. They are all good workers. Except for vacations, they never take time off from their jobs. Steve, Bill and Carl are also very good parents and they have taught their children well. Steve's children help him with yard work and log splitting. Bill's son helps his dad with fixing houses. Carl takes his young children to the YMCA for swimming lessons and also to Cambridge for Pokémon games. Carl's oldest daughter takes care of the family car by cleaning it.

Bringing up children is not always easy but my wife Barbara and I are very happy with how our three grown sons have turned out.

By Carl





I came to America 23 years ago. I came from Cabo Vard. I lived on Sal, Cape Verde, one of ten islands in Cape Verde. I came here to work. I only went to school for three years on Sal. There was a lot I had to do around the house. There was no time for school, not time for fun. When I left home I started scuba diving for octopus, lobster and fish to make money. I sold to the restaurants and took tourists diving. I was very good and I loved it! Then I made my money. I came here for a better life for me and my family.

By Paulo

MY CAT FLUFFY



I have a cat named Fluffy.

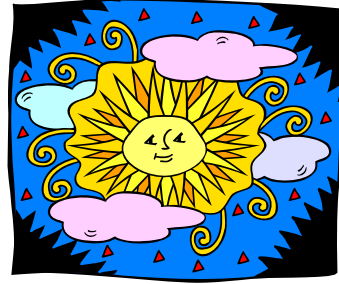
She is all black and she sleeps and eats all day long.

Fluffy stays with my mother during the day and comes to my apartment at night.

Fluffy jumps up on my kitchen cabinets and gets on the night table and knocks over my glasses and my cell phone.

I still love my Fluffy.

By Debbie



After working 38 years, a bad day came. The bad day was that I was let go from my job.

It was a good day to find the Literacy Volunteers Program at the Thomas Crane Library.

I have dyslexia. I lost so much.

Knowing how to read has changed my life. After talking to Mr. Morrissey my self esteem is greater and I am not embarrassed to ask and get help.

By T.C.



MY STORY

I was born in Cape Verde. I came to America with my parents. I was a young adult when I came. After two years I got married. Then I had four children, three boys and one girl. The boys' names are Nelson, Nilton and Danny. The girl's name is Veronica. Nelson and Nilton are twins. They finished college. Danny finished high school and will go into the Marines in June. Veronica will finish high school this year. She will go to college next year.

I have been a single mom with four children for 10 years. My life was very hard. I worked hard at two jobs to take care of my four children. I didn't have time for me or for school. Now I am so happy.

I have started to learn how to read, write and speak English much better. I am getting confident speaking English with Americans. I hope that I will be able to read and speak well enough to get a better job. Then I can work only one job and have more time for me and my family.

I am so happy I found Carol (my tutor) and the library to help me to be a different person. By Elvira



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A GOOD PARENT?

To be a good parent takes the following: Love, Patience and Discipline.

Love plays the most important role in being a good parent. In my opinion, love is the foundation of the relationship between parent and child. For example, growing up as a child was not easy for me due to financial problems. Therefore, because of the love I received from my parents, I have learned to be self-sufficient.

When it comes to parenting, patience also plays a critical role. As a parent, you must be alert and calm. As an example, my 14 year old son is easily distracted when doing his homework. I use positive body language and facial expressions to encourage him to finish his work.

Discipline is essential when it comes to raising children. Discipline includes responsible behavior in the home. For example, every day my children are responsible for picking up and sorting and putting their clothes in the hamper. Good behavior is

always at work at my house. I believe a child must show their nice behavior whether at home or out in public. Good behavior lets others see that your child is pleasant and polite. At times, my six year old daughter acts badly when she can't have her way. This happens at home and in a store like Wal-Mart. Trying to control your child in public is not an easy thing to do. As a mother of three children, enforcing good behavior is the most important part of discipline.

After all, having these three life skills will develop healthy relationships and prepare my family for a brighter future. Showing my children affection will build them up and help them to become independent. Also, taking time to be patient without rushing them will improve their life. Disciplining my children will make them appreciate life more. Overall, my family will be happy and have respect for themselves and for others.

In my opinion, love, patience and discipline are all keys to good parenting. These three qualities help form a healthy bond between parent and child.

By J. Alleyne

LOBSTER PEOPLE



I have been making lobster people since I was a kid. My brother and I started by collecting shells from the beach on Rainsford Island, one of the Boston Harbor Islands. We used styrofoam bases with trash bags for sails. Then we attached flat rocks for rudders and keels. We would decorate with the shells and use soda caps for the port holes. There were a lot of different shells on the beach. There were razor clams, mussels, crab legs and bodies.

One day we got the idea of trying to make something with lobster shells and that's how the lobster people came to be. Each figure is made with one whole lobster. First you separate the shells and pick out all the lobster meat. Then boil the shells twice so there is no smell. I use all the shell parts: claws for the head, fins for the feet. I put the tail of the lobster in the body to form the belly of the figure. Then I get eyes and hair from the craft store. I make and add glasses out of wire. After the figure is complete, I glue it to a wooden base with rope for decoration. Depending on the figure, I'll paint different outfits on it.

I've made fishermen, doctors – anything you can think of, I've made them all. Once I made a rock and roll girl guitarist for the B-52's.

I even made one from a 13 pound lobster that stands between 3 to 4 feet tall. For the past few years I've made the trophies for the local chowder fest. I really enjoy doing this and I like the added income.

By Billy

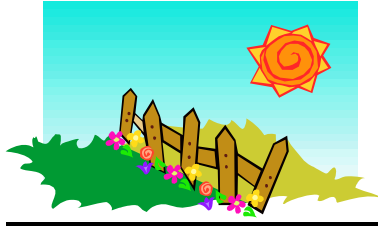
HAVING A VOICE



I love to sing, but my voice is not kind to me because I don't have a beautiful voice. I have to be kind to my voice. I should be happy to have a voice. A voice can have great things to say and help me do things I want to do and say the things I want to say. Please speak up for yourself.

By Shirley

CONTINUED SUMMER PROJECT



Last summer I decided to install a vinyl fence just like the ads that you probably see from Lowes. I went to Lowes and bought 4" x 4" x 8' posts, 6' x 6' panels, 4" x 4" x 8' vinyl sleeves and other supplies that are required to build a fence. I have a friend who owns a pick-up truck who helped me pick up the supplies and bring them home. The next day I dug the holes for the fence posts. The first few holes were easy. After that there were a lot of rocks. At that point I wished I had hired a contractor to install the fence. But I didn't quit. I went on digging the rest of the holes, about 15. It took me a few weekends to dig up the holes. After that, installing the posts and panels weren't as hard as digging the holes. I just need a few weekends with good weather to finish the fence.

IN APPRECIATION TO MY STUDENT

My student is an inspiration to me. Every time we meet I think about how strong and dedicated she is. I marvel at her ability to enjoy working hard. I look forward to hearing her laugh when she makes a mistake or when she thanks God when she gets it right.

It hasn't been easy. Working two jobs is a big responsibility. But that hasn't stopped my student from learning consonants, vowels and digraphs. From being uncertain about her English and her reading, to feeling confident – in just over a year – is a huge accomplishment. I am so proud of my student and I invite all to join me in recognizing Elvira for having done so much in so short a time.

Sincerely,

Carol Johnson

Dear Robert:

I am so impressed with Robert. He is taking courses at UMass/Boston so that he can become a counselor. It is not easy for adults to return to school, but Robert has persevered. And I am very proud of the progress he has made.

During our meetings, we normally read through one of his textbooks, which are very difficult and full of psychological terms that neither one of us fully understands. We stick to it, though, checking words in the dictionary, highlighting important information in the books, taking notes, and sometimes talking about how a topic that we had read about was discussed in class. Robert has just finished a class on the Adult Criminal Justice Offender and is planning on taking a certification exam to become a Certified Criminal Justice Specialist (CCJS), so he is currently filling out the application form and we are reviewing his Criminal Justice textbook to prepare for the exam.

I know that Robert has been working hard outside our tutoring meetings too. He has approached a Reference Librarian for help with a group research project that was assigned in one of his classes, and he has just started a Computer class through the LVQ. He is dedicated to achieving his goal of becoming a counselor. I am sorry that I could not be at the Recognition Ceremony to congratulate him in person for the progress he has made.

Sincerely,

Meg Mullaley

Dear Diane,

Congratulations to you on finishing your work with the Literacy Program this year! Today is a graduation of sorts for you, a day that seems appropriate to share a few memories of our time together. (I promise to try not to embarrass you or to be *too* mushy!)

When we first started meeting in the fall of 2005, I could see how seriously you took this business of learning. I could also see that you were nervous about what to expect. What you may not realize is that I was nervous, too.

Before too long, we both became comfortable. You'd greet me with a bright smile and we'd get to work. You could see that things were making sense and I felt happy that someone finally appreciated my urge to run to the dictionary every time an unfamiliar word came up!

Over the years, we had more and more fun. You always brought joyfulness to your studying. You also had questions – lots of questions! And that made my job easy: I just had to try my best to answer them. Together, we were a pretty good team.

It was a wonderful adventure of writing and reading with a rogue year of math thrown in. There were several classic authors and even some poetry. How freeing for you to get to choose what you'd like to study at long last! For quite some time, you went on a biography kick, bringing in books about this historical figure or that. So, we read a lot about strong women, which suited you quite well. One person led to another and another: Amelia Earhart, Susan B. Anthony, the suffragettes, Harriet Tubman, C.J. Walker, Eleanor Roosevelt and Margaret Mead.

Finally, we worked on more grammar than I ever remember learning in school. I'm not sure you believed me when I told you I was learning right along with you, but I was! This English language of ours has more than its share of rules and spellings that don't make sense, but it's kind of great that way, too.

My favorite times in that little Richardson study room were spent writing down your stories. That's what reading and writing is really all about, after all... being about to share your story with the world in your own way. I'm so glad you feel better able to do that now.

So, congratulations, Diane! You should be proud of all that your dedication, persistence and sense of humor have helped you achieve. I know you'll share what you've learned in your own way. You already are, by letting your young grandchildren see their Nana's enthusiasm for learning and respect for education.

Thank you for sharing this adventure with me!

All my best,

Merry

HOW TUTORING HAS HELPED MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN MY LEARNING

I can't say enough about how grateful I am for the tutoring that has been given to me. I had a low self esteem when I came to tutoring here at the library, not sure about anything or what to expect. In walking through my fears about my learning ability I found hope and so much more because of your patience and kindness towards me. You made me believe I could do anything if I worked hard enough at it and in turn you helped make me believe in myself.

I got far more than I signed up for and it's been because of you and the dedication to your job. Your teaching ability and your desire to help others succeed has made me excited about my schooling and my ability to learn. Slowly my attitude towards myself has changed. You have helped me believe that no matter where I come from or what my weaknesses are, that I can change them in time by making a decision to be consistent and dedicated to showing up on time and putting my all into whatever we are working on.

Thank-you for all your time and everything you have taught me about learning in school and also learning about myself. In the end when I have reached my goals, your kindness and the things you have taught me will be passed on to someone else who I in turn will help, and that's a beautiful thing!

By Robert





I remember when I had to take my road test for my driver's license. When the state policeperson came into my car, I was very very scared. I did not want to make a mistake. I wanted my license so bad.

But the hardest part, was studying for the reading part of the test. It was so difficult for me. My reading skills were not the best but I passed it!!!!

I still do not know how I did it, but I guess when you want something so bad you focus on what you are doing.

By Nathalie