

Celebrating
Our Journey

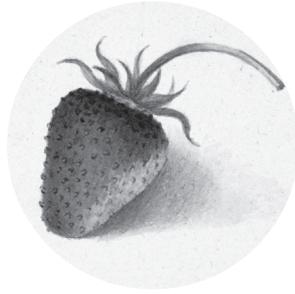


Volume 11

Celebrating
Our Journey

Volume 11

A Collection of Life Stories
written by Oklahoma Adult Learners



Oklahoma's adult learning and literacy programs
are always reaching out for new students, tutors,
and sponsors.

For more information, call the
Oklahoma Department of Libraries
Literacy Resource Office at 1 (800) 522-8816,
or contact your local adult literacy program.

You can find local programs at
libraries.ok.gov/literacy/find-a-literacy-program

Copyright © 2019 by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries

Seven Hundred (700) copies printed at a cost of \$4,528 as authorized by 65 O.S. §3-110.
Copies have been deposited in the Oklahoma Publications Clearinghouse. 8/2019.

Contents

Foreword	xv
----------------	----

Advice

My City: Bursa, Turkey	3
Nurşen Arabacı	
Great Advice	5
Shannon Bailey	
Pen Pal	7
Niki Brown	
The Greatest Advice	9
Linda Craig	
L.J.'s First Fishing Trip	10
Harold Escoe	
Good Advice From My Grandma	13
Juan Carlos Castro Ramirez	
Helpful Advice	15
Elvonne Robinson	

Brave

Bravery	19
Zoe Anderson	
No Need to be Afraid	21
Billy Colson	
Brave	23
Brandy Frisbie	
Bravery	24
Jenifer Herrea	

Bravery	26
Nancy Lane	
A Brave Papa	27
Vicki Patterson	
Moving to Different Cities and Countries	29
Adriana Miaja Posso	
180° Turn	31
Kelly Useche Ramirez	
A Different Way of Being Brave	33
Jose Rivera	
Bravery	35
Sarah Smith	
A Brave Girl	37
Rita Vazquez-Rojas	

Goals

Reaching My Goals	41
Floride Aboudja	
My Career Plans for My Life in the United States	42
Maryam Alamarvdashti	
My Goals	44
Mario Alvarez	
Business Administration	45
Vivian Arreaga	
Reaching My Goal	46
Oluwabunmi Tunrayo Bamidele	
My Goal is to See the World	48
Olga Barak	

Reaching Our Goals	50
Sabrina Barros	
Reaching My Goals—RN	51
Dania Bolivar	
My Goal	53
Daniela Bravo	
My Life in the United States	55
Gladys Campos	
A Goal Achieved	57
Angelica Carrillo	
My Most Important Goal	59
Mi Hwa Cha	
Reaching My Goals to Be Independent	61
Basma Chehabi	
The Road to Success is Worth the Daily Effort	63
Sheyla Cobenas	
Reaching My Goals	65
Isabel Covarrubias	
Choosing a New Path	67
Maura Pilar Valdez Cruz	
Reaching My Dream	69
Sufia Ellis	
Becoming a Manager	71
Aura Maria Engleman	
My New World	72
Rochelle Fields	
Reaching My Goals	73
Blanca A. Flores	

A Colombian Woman ... Becoming a Manager	75
Maritza Garcia	
My Goal	76
Haydeh Ghasemi	
A Bear's Journey	77
David Gonzales	
Achieved Goals	79
Maria Gonzales	
A Journey with My Angel	81
Maria Guzman	
My Goal	82
Silvia Harvey	
Finding My True Passion	84
Brenda Hernandez	
Perseverance	86
Erick Hernandez	
It's Never Too Late	88
Mauren Hernandez	
My Goal	90
Julio Herrera	
The Goal I Want to Achieve Now is:	
Pass the TOEFL Test	91
Katy Herrera	
Reaching My Goals	93
Haein Kim	
Keep Moving with Courage	95
Huai Kim	
Reaching My Goal	97
Dionicio Labra	

My Goal is to Open My Beauty Salon Brand	98
Chau Le	
My Goal of Citizenship	100
Dang Le	
My Goals	101
Ngoc Le	
My First Car	102
Orquidea Diaz de Leon	
My Plan to Speak English Fluently	103
Araceli Lopez	
My Life and Goals	105
Islia Lopez	
My GED Goal!	107
Jose Lopez	
Lily Lopez	108
Lily Lopez	
Personal Goal	110
Lorena Lopez	
Reaching My Goal	111
Lucila Loya	
The Two Goals of My Dreams	113
Ericka Lozano	
The Little Girl	115
Laura B. Malagon	
My Goal	117
Bindis Maldonado	
My Goal	118
Samira Mamour	

Becoming an Engineer is My Goal	119
Sawn Lian Mang	
My Goals	120
Rossana Marchena	
Next Level	121
Marcos Agustin	
Reaching My Goal Made Me Feel Happy	123
Beatriz Marquez	
Reaching Our Goals at My Second Home	125
Elizabeth Gomez Marquez	
The Same Way	127
Cecilia Martinez	
My Life in the United States	128
Maria Martinez	
My Life in the United States	130
Valentina Martinez	
My Reading Story	132
Lawana McCalister	
Reaching My Goals	134
Savannah Mcgee	
Starting Again	135
Maribel Medina	
Reaching My Goals	137
Laura Mercado	
Becoming an Accountant in America	139
Em Nguyen Ngoc Minh	
Reaching My Goals	140
Khin July Moe	

My Job in a Darden Restaurant	141
Arturo Montanez	
Better Opportunities	143
Sergio Monzon	
Reaching My Goals	144
Margo Morales	
Reaching My Goal	145
Irma Moreno	
My Story	146
Akbar Motian	
My Goal: An Automotive Technician	148
Chuong Nguyen	
My Future Goals	149
Ha Nguyen	
Become a Physical Therapist	151
Hoang Nguyen	
The Goal I'm Working for Now is College	153
Linh Nguyen	
Reaching the American Dream	154
Thanh Nguyen	
Becoming a Criminologist	156
Brenda Nunez	
Cook in a Restaurant	157
Irene Depri Olilo	
My Story	158
Roberto Olivarez	
The Person That I Want To Be Again	159
Arturo Ortega	
Never Give Up On Your Goals	160
Dora Perez	

My Goals	162
María de la Luz Perez	
Reaching My Goals	163
Fatime Rama	
My Daughters and My Goal	165
Ana Ramos	
My Goal	167
Sunil Regmi	
Fighting in Adversity	169
Fr. Graciano Reyes	
My Goal	170
Diana Rivas	
My Goal	171
Angelica Rivera	
The Only Failure in Your Life ... Is Not to Try What You Long For	172
Belinda Z. Rivera de Rodriguez	
Reaching My Goals	174
Lilliana Rodriguez	
Reaching My Goals	175
Maribel Rosario	
Nothing Is Impossible	177
Cinthya Paola Ramos Rubio	
A Different Culture	179
Ramona Rubio	
My Dream in Oklahoma	180
Luis Angel Saavedra	
Reaching My Goal	182
Isabel Salinas	

Learning English	184
Erika Sanchez	
Reaching My Goal	185
Pabla Sanchez	
Better Late Than Never	187
Saydee Saucedo	
My Goals	189
Hongxia Shan	
A Letter of Goals	190
Lara Shen	
Mr. Fix It	192
Adrian Silva	
Reaching My Goals	193
Chihiro Smith	
Reaching for the Goal	195
Nadezda Smith	
What Is Next?	198
Priscilla Soto	
Pursuing My Goal	199
Wendy Meza Soto	
Reaching My Goals	201
Iris Red Sullivan	
Becoming a Chef	203
Junhui Tan	
Reaching My Goal	205
Lois Thurston	
My Car	205
Jose Tiguila	
Reaching My Goals	206
Iraidis Tineo	

My Goal	207
Camila Torres	
My Goal Now	208
Ingrid Garcia Tovar	
Reaching my Goals	210
Anh My Tran	
My Citizenship Goal	212
Hoai Thu Tran	
My Dream Is Becoming a Nurse	212
Nga Tran	
Reaching My Goals	214
Ngoc Tran	
Reaching My Goals for My Children	216
Elia Vazquez	
My Goal	218
Maria Vazquez	
My Dream	219
Diana Velasquez	
Becoming a Cosmetologist	221
Elizabeth Villa	
Certified as Medical Assistant	222
Marlyn Villalobos	
My Job at Walmart	223
Merlyn Villalobos	
My Goal	224
Erika Villanueva	
Becoming a Student: My Truth	225
Ernestina Vital	

My Goal 227
 Maria Vo

My Great Ambition 229
 Phung Vo

My Life with Faith 231
 Trasea Westfall

Rise Above 233
 Angela Woodward

The Goal 235
 Eriko Yamada

Reaching My Goals 236
 Philip Yang

Becoming a Manager of a Cleaning Company 238
 Nora Zermeno

Believe In Yourself 239
 Cai Zhou

My Goal is to Get a GED 241
 Zung Zung

Poetry

MOM 245
 Elisa Aguinaga

My God 246
 Bryce Powell

When I Close My Eyes 247
 Anshu Rasaily

Bravery 250
 Doug Williams

Foreword

With each new volume of Celebrating Our Journey, we are reminded of the power of the written word. The ability to write our language for others to read has been the way we communicate across generations to reveal history, whether it is the great history of a nation or the intimate history of a family. It is a gift we share with people in our lives now, and with people who come later.

In this 11th volume, more than 150 Oklahoma adult learners have put pen to paper to add their written contribution to the collection of stories and personal histories that help illuminate who we are. As a published work, it will find a place on home and library bookshelves, and be handed down to younger generations to discover.

No matter our age, or our command of the language, we recognize ourselves in the stories of these adult

learners: the quest for an education, the hard work to reach a goal, the desire to provide the best for our loved ones, and the promise of a better life.

And so... we celebrate the bravery, courage, and the tenacity of spirit these adult learners have shared in the pages of this special book. Their new found knowledge of reading and writing promises a brighter day for them... and for us, as well.

Leslie Gelders

Literacy Administrator
Oklahoma Department of Libraries

Advice

My City: Bursa, Turkey

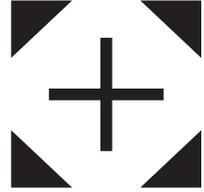
I was born and grew up in Bursa, Turkey. I studied Primary School, Secondary School, High school and University in Bursa. My childhood was very nice and happy. I have two sisters and one brother. In the neighborhood with my friends, we jumped rope, played ball, ran races, and played house games.

In the spring and summer on weekends, my father would take us on a mountain picnic and we would barbecue. The mountain name is Uludağ. Especially, in the summer, we escaped from the warmth of the city, we were cooled here. The summit of Uludağ is 2546 meters.

Bursa is a beautiful city. There are a mountain and sea. We can live both climates at the same time. Bursa also is called Green Bursa. Years ago, everywhere was green. Today, greenery in Bursa has been decreased. Bursa became one of the largest industrial cities in Turkey. Mainly industries are textile,

automation, and auto spare parts. There are two car factories in Bursa.

Bursa received immigration from other cities and countries. Currently, the population of Bursa is 3 million. Therefore, the number of buildings is rapidly increasing. While the greenery is decreased.



Many kinds of fruits and vegetables grow in Bursa. Especially, Bursa has famous land for growth peach, fig, olive and olive oil, chestnut, apple, pear, melon, watermelon, cherry, strawberry, green and red plum, orange, mushrooms, pumpkin, squash, salad, onion, tomato, pepper, etc.

There are four seasons in Bursa. December, January, and February are winter, March, April, and May are spring, June, July, and August are summer, and September, October, and November are fall months. Bursa has a moderate climate. Every season is beautiful in Bursa. Bursa is also a historic and

touristic city. I want you to come and see Bursa in Turkey. Bursa was the former capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Nurşen Arabacı
Stillwater Literacy Council

Great Advice

The best advice I was ever given was to stay in school and learn all I could, but I never understood why. I always thought I knew everything growing up. I was smoking cigarettes, ditching school with the so called “cool kids,” talking back to my elders, and never doing class work or showing up in class.

I dropped out of school in the 6th grade and went to work as a bed maker in a nursing home until I was old enough to take the test to become a nursing assistant in Oregon City. I worked two shifts a day for six years. Then, I moved to Oklahoma City and went to work in a nursing home. I was doing

better than most teens even though I had little education. I had a bank account, cars, a home, things that most teens were just dreaming of.

My parents were proud of me until I started running around with people that were on drugs. Soon, I was on drugs! On November 19, 1990, I was busted for distribution and conspiracy to distribute (C.D.S.) In 1991, I was sentenced to 8 years in prison. I had lost everything, and now I was a felon, drug addict, and uneducated.



Years passed quickly. I was pregnant every year. My ex-guy friend ran over me with his car, landing me in surgery requiring six screws and 2 rods in my spine.

Now I'm 47, it's 2019, and my children are grown. I am 8 years clean, have a wonderful new husband with a healthy relationship, and am trying to get my education which I struggle with, but love!

Do I wish I had listened to the advice I was given so many years ago? Well sure! But I didn't, and here I am working to get it now. It means a lot to me that I am learning something. I really thought it would be a waste of time; but now that I'm doing it, I feel really great. I don't feel like education is a waste of time at all, at any age.

Shannon Bailey

Community Literacy Centers, Inc., OKC

Pen Pal

I think it's great advice to have a pen pal for practicing writing and for fun!

In 1st grade, they didn't teach me how to read. I didn't know I had a reading problem until I was older. I struggled in school, but liked sports. In high school, I got a job at Wendy's. I needed help with job applications. I was in the Special Education program, but they didn't try hard to teach me. I gradu-

ated from Memorial High School in 1980. Someone told me about the literacy program in 1986. Jennifer taught me how to use the computer to practice reading. I'm still in the program and my reading is improving!

One of the best things I've done is make a friend to keep in touch with. I met her on vacation in Hawaii. We went to Hawaii in September 2002. We stayed at the Outrigger Reef Hotel. We met Aldyth on a tour to Paradise Cove. We talked at the hotel because they were staying at the same one.

The next morning, we went to Pearl Harbor to see a documentary about the attack. We saw the monument of USS Arizona and the names of the soldiers. Being at the Arizona feels strange because of all of the young kids that passed away there. Next, we went to the USS Missouri and the Punchbowl cemetery. I asked the bus driver if we could get out and take some pictures. He said we couldn't. The

next day we took a limousine to the Punchbowl so we could take pictures.

Aldyth took us to Cheeseburger Paradise on the last day. Before we left, we exchanged addresses and hugged.

Aldyth sent us a letter and we wrote back. Now we email each other. We've been writing for sixteen years.

Niki Brown

Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service, Tulsa

The Greatest Advice

The greatest advice that I have been given is to forgive. But, no one ever told me that the person hardest to forgive would be myself. I never realized that to truly forgive others, I had to start with myself. This took me a long time to figure out.



Linda Craig

Forgiveness and love go hand in hand. You cannot have love if you cannot forgive, and you cannot forgive if you cannot love. At the cost of sounding mushy, love is the key to everything and so is forgiveness.

All that being said, let us get back to the point. I cannot tell you how to forgive. Everyone has their own way, but I can tell you when you forgive yourself, it is easier to forgive others. Forgiving yourself is not about making excuses for what you did, it is about accepting the responsibility of your actions and truly repenting of what you have done.

Linda Craig

TLI of the Literacy Council of Leflore County, Poteau

L.J.'s First Fishing Trip

It's now Friday and 3-year-old L.J. was up and ready for his fishing trip with Dad and Papa. He didn't

want to take his eyes off the driveway. Mom said,
 “L.J. guess who is coming up the drive?”



Harold Escoe

Up and running L.J. went. “Papa,
 Papa!! Go fish, go fish!!”

“Yes in a little bit. We got to get
 things ready.”

L.J. yelled out, “I’m ready Papa!”

“Oh you are? Well, we will need more stuff this time.”

L.J. said “We will why?”

“Because your dad is coming with us and we are
 also going camping.” From the look L.J. gave Papa,
 we knew he didn’t know what that was. So, Papa
 asked him.

“No Papa.”

“That means we are sleeping outside by the water,
 under the stars.”

Camp is set up, fire pit is ready, and lines are in

the water. Papa and Luke are talking. L.J. is sitting between them watching the bobber to see if it is moving. So far there been no action. It's about 3:30 PM and we started the fire and got ready to cook supper. Papa called L.J. to show him how to cook hotdogs over an open fire. Papa has L.J. get three dogs then and put them on the sticks and hold them over the fire.

L.J. got his too close to the fire and up in flames it went! "Papa, help fire!" Up the stick went. Off the wiener went. Up and up then down it went into Papa's lap! Up he went dancing around putting the fire out. L.J. is hysterically crying. All Dad and Papa can do is laugh, laugh, and laugh! Between the tear drops, L.J. says, "What's so funny?" Dad says "Go get another dog and I'll help you." L.J. learned teamwork goes a long way.

Good Advice From My Grandma

I remember my grandma as a great woman. She always tried to help others and she was a hard worker. She gave us the best of herself. She was like a mother to me, she raised me since I was one year old. She insisted that I stay in school.



Juan Carlos Castro
Ramirez

When I was ten years old, I told her, “I want to work part time as a helper in a mechanic shop.” She told me this, “Juan, I don’t have any money to leave you for your heritage, we don’t have our own house or possessions. The only thing I can give you as a heritage is the school. Please do not neglect your studies. It’s the most important thing I can give to you.” These words were written in my heart and I have been using them all my life.

After her burial, I was in the school working hard

for her memory and her heritage. After that I was working and studying at the high school, later the University, and I never stopped studying. Always I have something to learn. Most of the time the knowledge helps me to support my family.

When my wife had an offer to work here in USA, we left everything to have a better life in this wonderful country. I started to learn the language, and later I wanted to take the GED. When I finished the GED, I studied welding at the High Plains Technology Center, and I will finish this May 2019.

I want to do the same for my boys, give to them the same heritage that my grandma gave to me. “Always study because it’s the only thing you can preserve, and it will help you in your life.”

This is the heritage I have to give to my family.

Juan Carlos Castro Ramirez
Northwest OK Literacy Council, Woodward

Helpful Advice

The greatest advice I've ever been given is when I lived in McAlester, Oklahoma with my mom. I went to the library and began working with a lady on improving my reading. I was 49 years old and I was nervous as it was the first time I'd done it.



Elvonne Robinson

Bonnie was my first tutor in reading and she made me feel comfortable, but soon moved to work in a blind school. I continued with others until we moved to Kellyville to live near my sister and her husband. My sister told me of a similar program at Creek County Literacy Program in Sapulpa, Oklahoma where her husband had received help.

I started with one lady until she couldn't continue because of age related causes and have since worked with Barbara Morris for a long time. Sometimes we have to miss because of weather, illness, etc. I con-

tinue because I enjoy reading and love to do homework.

I enjoy reading more than anything! I like the Laubach, Challenger, and Voyager Series, with short stories, questions, and phonetic help with sounding out words. We've read short chapter books that were enjoyable, too. We meet at the Kellyville Public Library, but I also go to the Creek County Literacy Program building occasionally for books, vocabulary assessments, etc. They are so friendly and helpful! I will continue because I enjoy reading and believe I have been helped to read better.

Elvonne Robinson
Creek County Literacy Program, Sapulpa

Brave

Bravery



Zoe Anderson

I am brave! I faced my disability, dyslexia, and have accepted it. Many people have issues. Now I thank God for making me dyslexic because I look at things differently. Whatever your disability, don't hide it or be embarrassed by it. I had the courage to come to OIC to better my reading. Don't be ashamed by your disability. God made us in His image. If God is not ashamed of us, why should we be?

If you ask for help, you will get help. Since I've asked for help, I have a great family and friends and church family. There isn't enough money in the world to break the prison of dyslexia. All it takes is faith and time to break those chains. I know of celebrities who have dyslexia—Whoopi, Cher, Fantasia, Mohammed Ali. Just because you have a specific issue, it doesn't mean you can't achieve things in life.

I made sure my kids learned because I knew what I did not know. I raised a zillion kids, had 4 and adopted 3, one girl with dyslexia. There were always 9 to 10 kids at home. I'm proud of them. I pushed them to be the best in school. They were all successful, all graduated from high school, one is in the army, one in the navy, and one is a doctor. There were days I wanted to give up, Sometimes you have to cry, pray your way through, and watch God bring you through.

Fight your way through like a tiger or bear. If you don't care, no one will. When you have a problem, admit your weakness, get help, and then work to fix your issue. I am proud I am doing that with dyslexia. If God is for us, who can be against us?

Zoe Anderson
OIC of Oklahoma County, OKC

No Need to be Afraid



Billy Colson

One day, the Adult Literacy office called asking me if I would speak at *Chapters*. *Chapters* is a fund raiser for the literacy program. I was told I would need to write a speech about the literacy program and how much it has helped me. I said, “Yes.”

I wrote my speech about the program and how I got started. The program helped me get over my fear of not being able to read well. I practiced reading my speech a lot. I met my tutor at Hardesty Library and practiced my speech there. This is where the program was going to be.

I was nervous about getting up there in front of about 150 people. My tutor told me to look only at her when I was saying my speech. It may have helped that she gave me a little bit of wine to drink before I got on stage. I don't even drink! I got on

stage and started reading my speech. I looked at my tutor and she started crying. I looked at others and they started crying. It made me feel good because they cared about me and the progress I made. This made me proud of what I accomplished.

I spoke another time at “Chapters.” I wasn’t as nervous as I was before. It made me feel good to be asked again. This year, I was asked to be on the Oklahoma Literacy Coalition Board. I didn’t know what all was involved but I said I would. I am honored and feel privileged to serve on the board.

All these things, speaking at the “Chapters” and being on the Oklahoma Literacy Coalition Board gave me more confidence to talk to other adult students about not being scared or ashamed of not reading well.

Billy Colson

Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service, Tulsa

Brave

My name is Brandy. I am 43 years old, a wife and a mother of two boys. I live in Miami, Oklahoma.

When I was in school, I was in special ed classes. I



struggled with reading and math, but I had a wonderful teacher, Terry Nuvalle, that helped me through all of my difficulties.

I still struggle at times with my reading, but I know I'm improving and I have an amazing tutor, Cheyenne Osmundsen who is helping me. I can now read more challenging books and the reading involved with everyday life comes a little easier now. To be better with my reading takes bravery. My bravery comes from my positive outlook on life and believing in myself that I can get to where I want my life to be.

I hope my story helps you to have courage and bravery to get past all of your struggles you have in your life. No matter what you are dealing with, just hold

your head high and you can get through it all. Just keep working on your goals and dreams. You can overcome your obstacles.

I believe in myself and am proud of what I have accomplished. It's an amazing feeling. I can't describe the happiness I feel.

Brandy Frisbie

Miami Public Library Literacy Services

Bravery

Imagine a country with more than 20 million people, who have to go through a general blackout throughout the country for more than 100 hours. Because there is a range of temperature, from 40°F. to 100°F., being without electricity means it is either cold or hot, depending on the temperatures. Picture it happening every week without any notification from the government. That is my country Venezuela.

On 7 March 2019, the people in Venezuela lived

days in what seemed like a horror movie and it is nothing else but the consequence of a bad administration.



Jenifer Herrea

Because of these blackouts, the people in Venezuela lived 5 days without electricity and water, causing problems from buying food because

the supermarkets were closed, to the banks being closed. But the bigger problems are for people with special health treatments, because the hospitals are not prepared for that situation. For Venezuelans who are living in another country, that situation is very difficult and stressful because it is not easy to communicate with their family and friends.

When I arrived at EEUU (United States), there was the difficulty of immigration, different cultures, customs, food, but the most complicated for me was the language.

I found out that the Bartlesville Public Library has

a literacy program that helps people learn English. I started coming to their classes to try to overcome my language limitation. I have received the help of the literacy program since they give an excellent service for the community. Not only does this program give help with English, they also provide tutors and every week other classes that help people with their health. These are great tools to help to integrate in society.

Jenifer Herrea

Bartlesville Public Library Literacy Services

Bravery

My journey started a little over three years and five months ago. This is when I had the courage to walk away from addiction that had haunted me for over thirteen years.

When I was living in Florida, I would drive by The Treatment Center of the Palm Beaches. One day

the sign stood out to me. I had driven by this place numerous times before but this day was different!



Nancy Lane

Today, I can say that I'm proud of the woman I have become. My goal is to become a substance abuse counselor. I am willing to do whatever it takes to achieve this goal. I couldn't have told you this a year ago.

Nancy Lane

TLI of the Literacy Council of Leflore County, Poteau

A Brave Papa

Me, my sister, my niece and my daughter, along with my Mom and Dad went to Disney World. This was for Mom and Dad's 40th anniversary, even though my Dad tried to get out of going. When he saw there was no way out, he decided he had to be a brave Papa and just do it for his girls.

The girls did not let Papa ride the rides with Nana much, but I think that is why he liked most of the rides. We held hands. There was one he did not like. It was the Test-track, it went too fast.



Vicki Patterson

My daughter, Macasey and her Papa on this trip to Disney World flew by plane. Papa did not like to fly. He held hands with Macasey. This seemed to help Macasey and Papa feel good.

On the bus ride to Disney World, the motion of the bus made Papa not feel so good. On the boat ride it was dark, narrow and bumpy. He still felt queasy. Papa still held Macasey's and Addi's hands. This seemed to help Papa get through the ride.

I think Papa is afraid of heights and has motion sickness as well. He had so much fun on the scooters. We had lunch at a turntable restaurant. Papa liked this. We also discovered he did not like water.

Again, we found out that Papa wore T-shirts and a hoodie instead of his usual western attire. He had a lot of firsts on this trip.

One of his T-shirts read: Papa the Man, the Myth and the Legend. We had our picture with him in this shirt. It was a fun trip with our Papa.

Our trip to Disney World was pleasant. It took two granddaughters for Papa to be brave.

Vicki Patterson

Literacy Link, Midwest City

Moving to Different Cities and Countries

“The story of my life is that the fear of starting a new one can’t stop you from pursuing your dreams; we must always see the positive side of the changes that the destiny has prepared for us.”

I’m 35 years old and originally from Venezuela. Since

I was a child, I have lived in seven cities and three countries. My story starts in Caracas where I was born. Two years later my parents decided to move to San Cristobal. After finishing primary school the first big challenge came. My family had to move to Colombia because of my father's job.



Adriana Miaja Posso

In Cali, Colombia I finished my high school, surrounded by my mother's family. My sister and I had many friends and the moments we spent there were amazing.

Guess what—my mother, my father and I had to return to Venezuela but to a different city called Valencia. We had to start again, this time from scratch, to find new friends and start a new life. In Valencia, I finished my bachelor degree and one year later I got married and I found a job but again in a different city, this time pretty near to Valencia

so most of our weekends we were traveling back to meet our parents.

The story repeats itself. Due to the terrible crisis in Venezuela, we had to move to the United States. My husband got a job here in Oklahoma and for me it was difficult because of the language. I understand almost everything that people say to me but sometimes I freeze when I have to answer. Finally, I am here taking English classes in the literacy program and I'm so happy because my English is stronger and more fluid. Now we are living in Bartlesville and enjoying every moment.

Adriana Miaja Posso
Bartlesville Public Library Literacy Services

180° Turn

Life is full of situations and decisions that can represent a radical change in our routine. Although it is difficult, it makes us grow. Examples are: decid-

ing what career you want to study, having a baby, changing jobs, and dealing with the loss of a family member are among the most natural situations we face.



Kelly Useche Ramirez

My name is Kelly, and I want to tell you my story. A year ago, I was in my native country (Venezuela) and my boyfriend told me that his company was transferring him to the US. He decided to incorporate me into his new life and proposed to me to get married and leave. I honestly felt many emotions, happiness, fear, worry, and sadness. It was a decision between staying with my family or giving myself the opportunity to make it on my own. I evaluated again and again the pros and cons. I had the greatest desire to succeed and although the economic, social, and political conditions of my country did not allow me, I never gave up. Therefore, I decided to start from scratch, face a country with a differ-

ent language and culture, without the support of my family or a job.

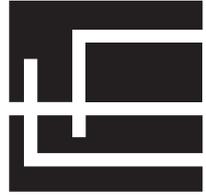
10 months passed since then, I am improving my English, finishing a virtual Masters Degree that I started in Venezuela, I already have authorization to work in the US, and I am anxious to get a job. Perhaps you are also about to start a new life, a new challenge, however, we know that life is full of obstacles, but the main idea is to persevere and overcome them. The easiest and shortest way is not always the best option and it is never too late to achieve our goals, so we must be brave and fight for what we want.

Kelly Useche Ramirez
Community Literacy Centers, Inc., OKC

A Different Way of Being Brave

Many people make mistakes during their lives. The most important thing you can do is to learn from

mistakes and start doing things different. I was blessed with everything: a beautiful wife, stepsons, and a good job. Unfortunately, sometimes you have to be in a situation like the one I am in right now to appreciate everything you have. I just did not see what I had when I had it.



One thing I have learned about this situation is that there are too many things in the free world. Too many opportunities, that before my arrest, I just did not see. Now I can see the importance of being an educated person. Education will open many doors to getting a better job and will enable me to offer a better quality of life to my family.

In the almost three years I have been in prison, I have found that you can achieve anything you want in life. The secret is hard work and discipline. Life is going to put you on the floor many times. It does

not matter how many times you fall, what matters is how fast you get up from the floor and keep fighting.

Thank God I have met very good people, I call them my angels, who have given me good advice. Advice to avoid making the same mistakes again and again. Now that I see things differently, I am very motivated. I am working hard to get my GED and then to attend university. I want to have a good career, take care of my family and start enjoying life again. Everything is possible in life when you are brave enough to put yourself in God's hands.

Jose Rivera

FCI Literacy Program, El Reno

Bravery

As scared as I was, I made the move. Growing up, I was always shy. I always depended on someone to speak for me. I reached a point in my life and realized that I was going to have to go out into the world

and do things on my own, so I made an appointment to join the TANF program. I was proud of myself for actually getting out of my comfort zone to better my life. It turns out it wasn't so bad.

On November 12, 2018, I woke up and got myself ready to take on my first day here at the literacy program. My nerves were rattling, and I was so nervous. I got here and walked through the door and overcame that feeling of being so scared. I went from that girl that never talked or did anything on my own to the girl that was blossoming. I was not only out of my comfort zone, but I had overcome my fear. I am going on three months in the program, and I feel like I can take on anything on my own as far as having to associate with people.

My advice to anyone who deals with the fear of communication would be to step out of your comfort zone, and you will find it is not as terrifying as you think.

Finding the courage to do so is not necessarily easy, but like me, you may find out you enjoy the communication, and you too can blossom.

Sarah Smith

Delaware County TANF Literacy, Jay

A Brave Girl



Rita Vazquez-Rojas

When we think of bravery, images of super heroes, police officers and lion tamers come into our mind. We never think of a humble little girl. We never think of a little girl who was born in the north of Mexico.

This little girl was the oldest of twelve children and was growing up without any kind of comfort.

Her father was a good man, but one with a hard character. He did not allow the little girl to go to elementary school. She must stay home to help her mother take care of the other children. Regardless,

the shy little girl was able to go to school with the help of her grandfather. She went to school without her father knowing. She was only able to go to school for a few months—for three years. With the bravery that characterized her, she learned to read, write, and do basic math.

One warm spring afternoon she happened to spot a handsome young man from far away. The young man was watching her. She had just arrived at her fate, meeting the love of her life. After some time, they were married and moved to the big city.

With just a little experience of life and a bit of education, the little girl left her small village. In her husband's care, she left her modest environment and came face to face with a new world. This brave, courageous little girl was my mother. When I think of bravery, I think of my mother.

Goals

Reaching My Goals

Deciding to move to another country is one of the most difficult choices I had to make.



Floride Aboudja

While there are advantages to live in your own country or to move to another country, I believe that moving is more beneficial.

When I chose to move two years ago to the USA, I could not speak English, but I kept in my mind that I would learn because I wanted to go to school to study what I always wanted. I also know that there are good opportunities in this country. In the beginning, it was very hard but I knew that I would succeed. I want to be a nurse (pediatric) but before all that I need to take the TOEFL test. It is not easy, but I just need to focus on that.

You don't learn English only at school. You have to practice every day at your work or with your friends. For me, I met some people who help me practice.

Even my parents at home help me try to reach that wish that is to speak English one day.

As a result, today I can speak, hear, and read in English. Maybe I have not reached my goal yet, but I am proud of myself because it is a long way, and I do not give up. When you want to do something, you have to give all of yourself and all you have into it to succeed.

Floride Aboudja
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Career Plans for My Life in the United States

When I came to the United States, I had goals and aspirations to become a famous fashion designer and design my own clothing items and jewelry.

However, after starting my life in Oklahoma everything has changed. I realized that Oklahoma does not have many educational options regarding an

entrepreneurial career in fashion or cosmetic design.



Maryam Alamarvdashti

Therefore, I decided to change my choice to something in allied health as I felt I would have a more promising future with the career options in that particular area, such as a sonographer or radiologist.

I am enrolled in the TOEFL class made available from Oklahoma City Community College as a requirement to start taking classes at the facility to obtain my associate degree in allied health.

Afterward, my plans will involve choosing a career from the allied health field and I will continue taking classes with respect to that particular career. These classes may be available through select programs at OCCC or I may seek these classes at other colleges or universities.

While I have obviously changed my goals since coming to this country, I still have the intention of

becoming a fashion designer at some point in my life. It may be another career option for me in the future after my allied health career. It could also be something that I would do as a hobby. I think I will have a better plan once I actually start my career-oriented classes.

Maryam Alamarvdashti
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goals

One of the most important goals I have is speaking English. Good communication is the way to success and personal improvement.

Good communication and education are the key to open doors in this country of opportunities. My goal is to speak English fluently. I practice every moment possible. It is important for me to have patience and dedication to achieve this goal, but I know I can make it.

I hope I can realize my goals in the near future. I still have a long way, but every success requires effort. I know I can do it.

Mario Alvarez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Business Administration



Vivian Arreaga

My father is a great businessman. That is the reason why I chose to study business administration. My goal and dream was to be able to work with him and learn everything about doing business.

I started working with him in high school. That's when I decided to go to university to get my degree and get the knowledge to take the companies to the next level.

Finally, I worked with my dad around 10 years. Then, I decided to move on to find another of my

goals and dreams and start a family. Today, I'm living my dream. I have a husband and two children for whom I have been able to be a fulltime mother.

Vivian Arreaga
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goal

A goal is a future plan one desires to achieve in life.

It requires sacrifice, consistency, focus and commitment to reach a goal. I have made many goals in life some of which seem to be difficult to achieve but having heard stories of many great achievers, I believe I can also achieve my goals.

One of the most important goal I have ever reached in my life is leaving my country and coming to the United States.

Many young people in my country tried to come to the US through dubious means. I am happy that as

a young lady with strong moral standards, I came to the United States through the right channel.



Oluwabunmi Tunrayo
Bamidele

Another great goal that I worked for in Nigeria but have yet to achieve is to study nursing. I was once admitted to nursing college in my state in Nigeria but could not get a political connection required to remain in the program.

Now in the US, I am working towards admission to nursing school. In preparation, I am working to improve my English. At the Family Resource Center, I have gained the knowledge and confidence to step out into the real world and connect with people from different cultural backgrounds. The knowledge gained is very important now that I will study in America, a country with culture that is different from mine.

In pursuit of my goal, I have applied to some col-

leges in Oklahoma to study nursing. While awaiting admission I also plan to volunteer in nursing this summer.

When I stepped my foot on the soil of the USA, I was so full of joy and was proud. I will be happy and full of excitement the day that I bag a degree in nursing and become an American-trained registered nurse.

Oluwabunmi Tunrayo Bamidele
Stillwater Literacy Council

My Goal is to See the World

I was born under the Sagittarius sign, the sign of adventurers. In my youth, I loved to read books and watch films about adventures and journeys into far-away lands. In school, I loved history, geography, and foreign language classes. When I finished school, I went to work in a tourism agency that was owned by friends of my parents. I worked and studied at a

university. That's when my first adventures began: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Poland, Italy, Germany.

In 2009, I got married to my childhood friend that moved to Israel a long time ago. That's how I immigrated for the first time in my life and spent seven years of my life in this beautiful and wondrous country. But in the end, my marriage fell apart.

In 2015, I got married again—this time to a United States citizen. We later moved to the United States. I find the United States to be a fascinating and wealthy country full of opportunities for me and my family.

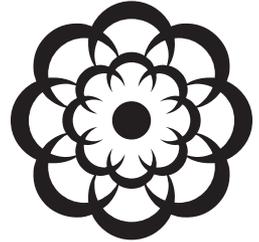
The world is enormous. I have been to many places and I'm not planning to stop visiting more. New cities, landscapes, wilderness, and countries await me. I am very happy.

Olga Barak

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching Our Goals

Try to think of something you really want and maybe seems impossible to bring to reality. Now, write it down on a piece of paper or in your phone. Once this is done, train your mind not to think about it as a whole. Divide it and separate it into smaller pieces. When you do that, you are pretty much telling yourself that the task that once seemed so big and unreachable, or close to impossible, is actually doable.



By compartmentalizing, we change what seems to be a long journey into smaller victories along the way. We tend to overestimate the grand arrival, the happy ending, the so-called famous finish line. But when are we really finished? Because we focus so much on what is yet to come, we end up forgetting the everyday achievements and small victories. So we need to cut our goal into little pieces and celebrate every minor conquest.

These two changes can make an enormous difference on how we see and celebrate life. And the good thing about all that is: once we are aware of those two realities, we can change them. We can finally start being thankful for the good night's sleep we had, the sun coming through the window, the rain on our roof (Yes, we've got a roof!), your mom's phone call because she was just thinking about you, and the list goes on and on.

I am not sure if that's the recipe for all our dreams to come true or that we are going to turn ideas into realities or that our business will finally launch. But I am sure it's the path for our lives to be full of happiness.

Sabrina Barros

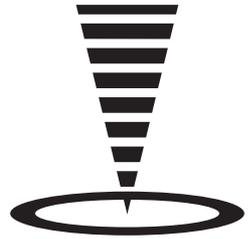
OSCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals—RN

My name is Dania Bolivar. I am a student at

Oklahoma Community College Center completing an ESL class and planning to continue with my education in English and nursing school.

My educational aspirations consist of acquiring a bachelor's degree that would assist me in pursuing in the medical field as a registered nurse. On the other hand, my career vision is to one day be able to help other people as a missionary to communities in the United States and or around the world. Also, I want to have a better life for me and my family.



However, I am certain that if I do not complete my college degree I could never have the opportunity to achieve my career goals. I decided that I will attain a career as a registered nurse since my passion has always been assisting others. Therefore, I think that pursuing such a career will provide me the opportunity to help improve the community's health quality conditions and learn about their medical needs.

Furthermore, I want to contribute back to the underserved population in the United States and/or around the world that struggles every day to sustain a family and do not have as much access to medical assistance as other privileged groups.

I know that all my goals will remain dreams if I do not complete my nursing degree. Therefore, I am committed to working hard in school and looking for opportunities that could help me make my goals a reality.

Dania Bolivar

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

My name is Daniela Bravo. I was born in Oklahoma, but I arrived four months ago because I have lived all my life in Acapulco, Mexico where my home is. Right now, I live with my aunt. In Mexico, I lived with my mom, sisters, and my brothers.

I love Acapulco. I grew up there nearby the sea. I am the only one who was born in the USA. I wish we had all been born here so that we could be together now. But I am grateful to my parents for giving me the opportunity to be here today. Everything happens for a reason.



Daniela Bravo

The goal I'm working for now is that I want to learn English to communicate with other people. I want to be able to talk to Americans and they can talk to me without problems. Also, I want to study to be nutritionist.

Everything is new for me. I've never been in Oklahoma; therefore, I have to learn everything. I'm happy to be here. It's a nice and quiet place. I will work hard to accomplish everything that I want to be.

Daniela Bravo

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Life in the United States

My name is Gladys Campos and I am a Naturalized American Citizen, thanks to God and my husband. Noting that I am already a professional CPA (Certified Public Accountant) in my former country of Colombia, my present goal is to learn to speak, write, and understand perfect English. My combined studies in Colombia equals a Master's Degree here in the United States. However my training did not include English classes.

I have been married for 14 years and during that time, I have been doing my own things in life, since my husband allows me to be my own person. I have studied English courses on my own, here in the United States. I studied for my Citizenship and became a U.S. Citizen in 2007. Sometimes I don't feel confident speaking on my own because my husband loves to speak Spanish. My first job was working for H & R Block doing taxes. I did this for about

three years with my friend Maria. This improved my English, but I still didn't feel confident in public speaking. I continued my English studies in ESL at different schools, like Rose State and OCCC. I have now dedicated my life to my husband; he works and I am his personal CPA.

I now feel confident with my English studies because of my strong personal attributes, dedication to studies, diligence, seriousness, strict will, and study habits that enables me to reach my goals.

At this point in life, I find myself in retirement mode; however, I still want to continue my ESL studies reaching the TOEFL goal of accomplishment. I feel confident that I can obtain this achievement with my present Faculty and Staff.

Gladys Campos
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

A Goal Achieved



Angelica Carrillo

The American Dream is that dream of the land in which life should be better, richer, and fuller for everyone. We all come to America with unique circumstances and hopes. I dare say that America is more than the Country of Dreams; it is the Land of the Brave.

I am not denying this is the Land of Opportunity; but to leave your family and prevail in a country whose language you don't know, alone and surrounded by many fears is not for the faint-hearted.

Be courageous and cling to your dreams to achieve your goals. We all have a goal to reach, whether big or small. A goal is a motivation to give your best every day. No matter how much the world tries to hold you back, always believe that your dreams are achievable. Reaching your goals is not easy or simple.

When I arrived in the United States, my principal goal was to become an American citizen.

This would give me more job opportunities and I could return to Mexico to visit my family.

To reach my goal, however, I had to overcome my fears and get out of my comfort zone and into this completely new world.

I started taking English and citizenship classes. It took me about a year to prepare for my citizenship test. I was ready, but I let my fears hold me back—but only for a moment. I did not let my fears grow bigger than my dreams, and I succeeded!

I'm currently studying in ESL classes. Now I have a new goal—to speak English fluently in order to help my children, who are growing up so fast! I know that with dedication it will be a goal achieved.

Angelica Carrillo
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Most Important Goal



Mi Hwa Cha

The most important goal I've ever reached was becoming a U.S. citizen. I didn't know much about my situation when I was a teenager. My permanent resident card was going to expire in the next year or so. It was time for a renewal. No one really ever spoke to me about having certain benefits when you're a U.S. citizen. In my late 20's it was time to renew my permanent resident card again. I struggled financially with saving money to become a U.S. citizen. I was always nervous about the whole process of citizenship. Luckily, a friend had come across a group called Duncan Area Literacy Council. They had free classes to help permanent residents with reading, writing, and studying for the U.S. citizenship test. I have only known one language, English. I moved to the United States when I was 2 years old. My

mother and unknown father were not U.S. citizens before I turned 18 years old. Therefore, I had to go through the process as an adult with the help from some wonderful people. Now I am a U.S. citizen. I have all the benefits of a citizen. Protection from deportation. No immigration fees to keep paying. Eligibility to work for the government. I have the ability to vote. Freedom to travel with a U.S. passport. I may have federal benefits now. I am capable of serving on a jury, showing patriotism to the United States. I am proud to be official.

I am currently enrolling in college which is another big step in life. I am capable of receiving financial aid assistance from the government for college. This has been a huge accomplishment. I am thankful for everyone who has been by my side through it all.

Mi Hwa Cha
Duncan Area Literacy Council

Reaching My Goals to Be Independent

Success in life brings people happiness. The road to becoming successful is long and hard but it is worth it at the end. My short-term goal is to become an Arabic teacher who can speak English fluently. Although a lot of my students are from the Middle East with parents who speak Arabic, growing up here, Arabic became their second language. The best way for me to communicate and explain Arabic is done in English. Other students from Pakistan or Africa speak only English. Therefore, English makes it easier for me to communicate with their parents to let them know how their children are doing. Also, I want to become independent here without needing my husband or kids to translate or help me at a doctor's office. Finally, I want to pass TOEFL with 500 score and get a college admission.

My long-term goal is going to Oklahoma City

Community College and studying there. Then transfer to University of Central Oklahoma to get my bachelor's degree in education. Even though I am working hard, I know I have to work on my weaknesses, such as reading, grammar, writing, and conversations. However, when I look back where I was and where I am now, I am progressing slowly but surely. I am very optimistic about reaching my goals, and I have to keep working hard without giving up.

I want to thank all of the teachers that work hard to make sure I am learning every day. Especially, teacher Kelly Kim for being very patient, supporting, and creative. As a teacher myself, I learned so many things from the teachers I had at OCCC.



Basma Chehabi
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

The Road to Success is Worth the Daily Effort

I must start by saying that the goal I most want to achieve is to communicate in English fluently. My first interaction with Americans was a complete failure. Although my level of English in Peru was intermediate. The only thing I could understand here was “Thank you” and “You’re welcome.” I felt very confident with my English grammar skills but the accents caused me a lot of problems, and they still do, even today. Every day I tried to acquire more vocabulary, and little by little I began to understand more.

It has been two years and a month since I arrived in this country, and my language skills have improved. But, I must say that it has only been achieved with daily effort. I started with programs to learn English, then learning the lyrics of songs or reading short pieces. I was even able to watch a movie in English

and understand it. Little by little I understood the language better.

When I got my first job in Arkansas, my English developed even more, but I definitely improved when I got my job as a Spanish teacher in a public school. This has been a great opportunity for personal growth that has allowed me to perform better in this language. Also, I must mention that OCCC in Oklahoma has helped me to consolidate my knowledge. Now, I feel capable of holding a conversation in English, reading texts, and understanding eighty percent of what I hear and write with greater confidence. By working daily on this goal, I am developing my English language skills quicker than I thought. That's why I titled my essay highlighting the daily effort as a way to triumph.

Sheyla Cobenas
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals



Isabel Covarrubias

My name is Isabel Covarrubias. I am the mother of two beautiful children, Sergio, who is 18, and Paulina, who is 15. My adventure began 22 years ago when I got married to a wonderful man and moved to the United States of America. Although I enjoy living in Oklahoma because it is a beautiful state and has welcomed me well, it has been hard for me being far from my hometown. This may be because I am one of ten siblings, and I am the only one away from home.

When I got pregnant with my first child, I decided to stay home and care for him. I wanted to be with my baby all the time. Three years later, my second child arrived, and of course, my hands were full. I was a full-time mom and really enjoyed those days. However, when it was time for both of my

kids to attend school, I looked for a part time job. This way, I could always be available for my children after school to help them with homework and school activities. I found a job as a nurse assistant and worked as one for 8 years. During this time, I had the privilege of working with the elderly, and I learned many things from them, especially to appreciate life.

Now that my kids are more independent and don't need me as much, I think a new adventure is waiting for me. It is the possibility of going back to school to pursue something that I always wanted, to become an interior designer. I know it is not going to be easy, but I am sure that if I put my heart in it, something good will happen.

Isabel Covarrubias
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Choosing a New Path

Making a big decision is never easy. It's like going on a road with different exits, some will take you on top of a mountain and others to a deep canyon. Everything depends on the path you choose.

Three years ago, my life changed drastically when



Maura Pilar Valdez Cruz

I decided to come to Oklahoma for a new job. I got an offer for working on a pig farm. I love animals and one of my dreams was in front of me. I left my house, my family, my job, my friends, and chose a new people, lan-

guage and places. It's hard because I gave up things that made me happy, like cooking breakfast, taking my sons to the school and being a mom full time. I came here with nothing but dreams and hope.

Each decision makes a new road and sometimes my decisions are not good. For example, when I decide to spend time with friends. In these moments I feel

free with new energy, but I forget to spend time with my family and that has made the road more difficult. But I have the opportunity of each new day, and I try again. When I feel lost, I remember my dreams, my sons and their future. I want them to have the best opportunities, know other countries, speak other languages, and have a better life. Then all things make sense. The mistakes don't matter if you learn from them.

The decision to work hard to have a house and all those things that I left in Mexico is important to me. I love my sons and I want them to grow up in a family full of love and values. I want to teach my sons that every dream they have can be achieved if they work hard and never lose their way. Sometimes it is necessary to give up good things to have better things.

Maura Pilar Valdez Cruz

Northwest OK Literacy Council, Woodward

Reaching My Dream

This is Sufia, a woman from the Middle East—Iran.



Sufia Ellis

I was lucky enough to live in two different worlds, East and West. I read somewhere that people look like trees. They make strong roots where they live, and if you try to move them, it is painful. This is true. I left my strong roots such as family and many good memories in my country.

I am going to tell you how I moved to Oklahoma a long time ago. I remember I desired to learn English with no purpose. I used all my free time and focus on learning English. Every time people asked me why I was learning English, my answer was, “I don’t know. I just love it.”

After I finished my school and university, I started working at a hospital as a surgical assistant. I kept learning English on my break and lunchtime. After

five years of working there, one day one of my coworkers that had moved to the USA three years before that, called me and said, "I remember you always loved learning English. We have a friend who can help you."

It was exciting to me to talk to somebody for the first time in a new language. After I met Jimmy, my new teacher, in Turkey, he asked me to marry him. We had a great time and I found him a lovely and kind person, and I said yes.

After many challenges in my life, I love it here in the US just the same as in my country. I have found great friends, and I have found a chance to write my story in my favorite language. I finally realize that I should have good English to fulfill my American dream.

At the end, I want you to follow things that you love and that help you grow, even it doesn't make sense

to the others. It can change your life in a blink of an eye. I am keen to learn in every point of my life.

Thank you, professor, thank you ESL, and thank you OCCC.

Sufia Ellis

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Becoming a Manager

My goal is to be able to exercise my Business Administration degree and become a manager one day so I can make more money to pay for my house, have a better life quality and to help my children pay for their college and see them fulfill their dreams.

To achieve that goal I finished high school in Colombia. Then I went to the University of Santiago de Cali to get my Business Administration Degree. Now that I moved to the US, I am attending Oklahoma City Community College to learn English.

I have big expectations. Studying and working give me a feeling of fulfillment and make me feel alive and productive. I have come a long way, and I'm still as motivated and determined as I was when I first decided to go for my Business Administration Degree.

Aura Maria Engleman
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My New World

The goal I am working on is to get better at reading so I can start Clary Sage to become a masseuse. I've always been good at giving massages.

Coming to tutoring classes helped. I love coming to tutoring even when I'm tired. I practice writing, reading, spelling, and phonics. I practice reading everything I see. If I keep practicing, I will get better. I read menus and labels off of food packages. I like to read murder mysteries and Anime stories.

I'm better at texting, writing stories and writing lyrics. I try to learn something new every day.



Rochelle Fields

I want others to know how good it is to learn and not be frustrated.

Reading is amazing! It opens a new world. My world is bigger now.

Rochelle Fields

Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service, Tulsa

Reaching My Goals

My name is Blanca A. Flores. I'm from Jalisco, Mexico.

After I got married, I came to the USA in the year 1999 for a better future. A month after arriving in Oklahoma City, my daughter got sick and we went to the hospital. We stayed for a month in the hospital. The doctors believed it was leukemia, but

after many studies, they said that it was Gaucher Wishing, a genetic disease.

It was terrible for me without knowing the language and with the disease of my daughter. Since 1999, she has been in a long-term treatment all her life.

In 2001, my second daughter was born, but unfortunately she died in 2005 because she had the same dis-

ease as my first daughter in a higher level. Now, I have two more daughters with the same medical genetic disease.

I also have two jobs, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. I also go to English class. These are some of the things in my life I have been through.

The goal I'm reaching for now is to continue to take English classes at OCCC so I will be able to under-



Blanca A. Flores

stand and communicate with my daughters' teachers and doctors, and I would like to become a United States citizen.

Blanca A. Flores
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

A Colombian Woman ... Becoming a Manager

My goal is to be able to work at what I studied in college—business administration.

There is a really great opportunity to grow my own business. For a year and a half, I've been my own boss. I take care of kids and use my knowledge of business administration in my company. I use legal documents, keep track of bills and expenses, organize, and build my work place.

It's a challenge to do things the legal way, and to

give love to children and teach them good values.
But I feel blessed, renewed, optimistic, and useful.

Maritza Garcia
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

Nineteen years ago, my husband and I got a letter from the United States Immigration. We made the decision to move our family to the United States.

My husband and I and our three sons moved to Oklahoma City in 2001 and stayed with my brother-in-law for 20 days. After that, we found a job and we rented an apartment. At first, being in a new country was really difficult, but after some years passed, we started to adapt. I worked really hard, learned how to survive and eventually we opened our own business.

My goal is to retire back home and come back and forth once a year. My three sons live here, and I have

a beautiful grand baby girl. I decided to spend the rest of my life with my family between Iran and here.

My other goal is learning more English to speak well.

I still miss my country, but now the United States is my second home and I am happy living here.

Haydeh Ghasemi

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

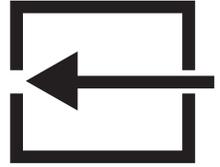
A Bear's Journey

What if the worst thing you ever did, was the first thing people remembered about you? I am an inmate and a former drug dealer. I am determined to change my story.

The low point in my life was my arrest and prison sentence. I decided at that time to change. God gave me a second chance, and I am determined to reach my goals now and make a difference in people's lives.

My story is not unique. In prison for the first time,

I have met many who share my past. What is different is I see this time as a chance to reset my life. Change my course, not only for me, but also for my wife and nine children.



I knew things had to change, but I was not sure exactly how. I set some goals that before this experience were not important to me. I began this transformation by surrounding myself with positive people who shared my commitment to change.

I took steps to be a more spiritual person and am now much closer to God. These important steps changed my focus from being selfish to doing things for others. No longer content to take the easy way, I enrolled in classes and began improving my skills. My wife, who suffered because of my actions, now can see a difference in me as I strive to be a better husband, father, and role model.

Like a bear who has been in hibernation, I am awake now and I see all of the wonderful possibilities avail-

able to me. I see a bright future. I have an opportunity to make a difference in my community. I hope my story encourages others to make good decisions in their life. By reaching my goals, maybe I can inspire others to reach for theirs.

David Gonzales
FCI Literacy Program, El Reno

Achieved Goals

In 1982, I left my beloved country because of the gangs, which killed, raped, and robbed people without mercy. The people they killed were very humble and they were not guilty of anything. They were taken out at night from their homes and killed in front of their family. I was grateful that the United States would open its doors to change my life situation.

Everything was different for me, because I could not communicate through the language with the

people. I did not understand the people who spoke to me. I could not go to the store, I did not understand the news or television programs and I felt frustrated. That is why, I decided to go to school to study English and be able to communicate.

One of my first goals achieved was when I obtained my residency. The second was when I got married and my beloved children were born. After several years of continuing



Maria Gonzales

to learn the language, I decided to apply for my citizenship. A third goal reached. After obtaining my citizenship, I felt more secure and happy to live in this country. Now I could apply for better jobs, get benefits, and travel with my family.

I feel happy to have achieved these goals, but I'm still studying to improve my English in the Literary Services Program. Thanks to these classes offered in the library, I feel more confident to express myself

and engage in a more fluent conversation with English speakers.

Maria Gonzales

Bartlesville Public Library Literacy Services

A Journey with My Angel

The most important goal I've ever reached is learning how to speak, read, and write English. This accomplishment will help me understand everything about my daughter's disabilities, which in turn will provide me the opportunities so that I will be able to help her. To have a loved one like her is very sad and it is hard.

The goal I am working towards now is studying English. I want to be a translator and help all the people who are having the same problems that I used to struggle with—for example, understanding the doctors, the school, and all they need

Reaching my goal made me feel complete and help-

ful. Now I can take my angel to the doctor's appointments and understand everything and help her in the future. I've always wanted to see her happy and now I can do it.

Maria Guzman
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

The goal that I am working on is to pass the TOEFL test. I will use the test to enter college to have a better career as a step in improving my life.

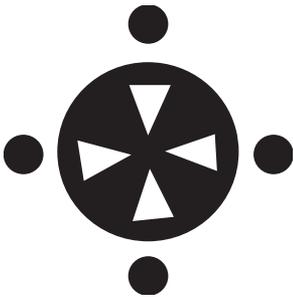
I have been studying for the TOEFL and taking each practice test as I am ready. I have completed 3 of the individual tests. I have 2 more tests to complete in order to achieve my TOEFL. The closer I get to passing TOEFL, I can picture my goal and I am very excited.

College is an opportunity to deepen my knowledge in the field of study that I choose. It will enrich my

life and deepen my education. You can continue to learn, and it is never too late to attend college.

Careers are accomplishments that give you confidence in yourself and your abilities. Every day you go to work is a day that you have earned through the hard work that led you to your career. Achieving your goals for college is very important.

Once you have reached the goals to earn your career,



it is a gateway to improving your life.

You will know that you are capable of supporting yourself and your family.

You can have a better house and you will be able to travel and enjoy vaca-

tions with your family.

The culmination of reaching the goals you have set results in having a better mind and accomplishments you can be proud of. TOEFL is the first step to college and the accolades of attending a higher learn-

ing facility, and also the career that you are reaching for and the life improvements that you enjoy.

Silvia Harvey
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Finding My True Passion

In Guatemala I was studying child psychology to become a teacher. I moved here and realized that my degree unfortunately was not going to get me a job in my field.

Then when I got here I felt that something changed inside of me along with my goals. I knew I had to learn English to reach my goals in this new country. I began to look for options and found this ESL program.

Now that I have this opportunity, I started to think of what my next step is going to be. Also I realized that I can't find places where I can eat Latin food, so I started to make some Guatemalan recipes. I

found that I love cooking for my family and friends on birthdays or holidays. As a result, an idea came to my mind. I knew I had to work very hard to reach it but I think it is going to be worth it. I want to open my own restaurant.



Brenda Hernandez

I would like to do this most because I love our flavors and I miss our food so much. Also because our recipes came from generations that I learned from my grandmother and my Mom. I think this passion was hiding and came out at the right time. On the other hand, I want to show Oklahomans that we have really good food and very tasty flavors made from scratch.

In conclusion, this new passion was born because I missed my country a lot and our rich and flavorful food, and because I love cooking and sharing my knowledge in culinary arts with others.

However, I know it is not going to be easy. I have to fight to reach my goals, so I hope that everything I planned and I dreamed will come true.

Brenda Hernandez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Perseverance

“Rome was not built in a day.” Perseverance is the basis of success. It is always important to have a firm objective, so in my case, I write about mastering the English language.

My goal is to learn English in a systematic way where the results show progress. Examples are to be able to go shopping or go out to eat without shame, and if I have a doubt, be able to express it and also understand the other people. Another step is to attend a job interview and express all my knowledge without language being a barrier.

Managing the English language is my goal because



Erick Hernandez

it has stopped my personal progress. The experience I have speaking English is little, but I hope to improve it day by day by talking more at work and listening to the radio and TV. I have planned for a year and half to express myself clear and fluently in English.

One way to keep track of the objective is to attend classes, do my homework, and lose the fear of “what people say or think of me.” Reading, listening to music and watching TV will help achieve my goal. Also, continuing classes at OCCC, advancing to the next level and moving on to complete all the courses offered. To be able to reach my goal, I will persevere and not give up and remember that “Rome was not built in a day.”

Erick Hernandez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

It's Never Too Late

I was in my last year of High School, 17 years old and ready for my future. Coming from a family of educators, I knew all my life that was my passion as well. In life, many times we have heard the phrase, "Life can change in a blink of an eye," and for me it was becoming a real life thing. In September of 2004 in a supermarket bathroom, I found out that I was pregnant. I felt that the world fell over me. I was scared, nervous, but mostly in shock. What was I going to do?

After all 6 months later from that day, I became a young mother of a beautiful baby girl, and from that day until now there is nothing that I would change. Being a mother for the last 14 years has been the best thing that could ever happen to me. I have two lovely and amazing children that I love with all my heart.

A few months ago I decided to relive my dream and

enrolled back in school. Not just for me, but to prove to my children that you can always accomplish your goals and achieve your dreams.

Now that same fear that a 17-year-old girl felt when she discovered that she was pregnant, a 31-year-old woman feels about going back to school. But now much more mature, knowing that nothing can stop you, that no fear can break you when you feel the need of a better future.



You, who may read this, do it!!

Believe in yourself, take the chance, don't give up. Fight for what you deserve and follow your dreams. There is no limit.

You're never too young or too old to reach your goals and fulfill your dreams!

Mauren Hernandez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

My goal is for my daughter to have the opportunity to go to university in four years. Any state school that she would like to apply to is good so long as she likes the kind of professional work she chooses. I would like to see her graduate and enter a career. I would like her to study as a doctor or lawyer, or something about engineering, but I will be happy with any decision she wants.

I ask her all of the time what kind of profession she wants when she goes to university, but she is very shy to tell me about what she wants to do in her life. I think anything she has in her head will be fine for me because she makes me happy too.

Julio Herrera
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

The Goal I Want to Achieve Now is: Pass the TOEFL Test

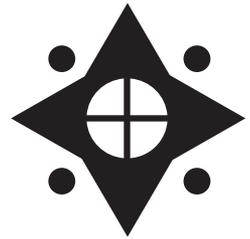
Even though I have a lot of goals in this time of my life, my most important goal is to pass the TOEFL test. I have been preparing to take the TOEFL test for a year and a half.

The TOEFL test is one of the principal tools of measurement that evaluates the ability of a person to use and understand English as an academic language. The TOEFL test allows admittance in more than 9,000 universities around 130 countries including Australia, Canada, and United States. Your score will be available two to three weeks after you have taken the test. The score you receive will be valid for a period of two years, after that you'll not be able to use them.

The TOEFL Test has three sections; the first section is "listening," in which you'll hear short and large conversations and answer 50 questions.

The second section is “grammar,” which has 40 questions and you must finish in 25 minutes. The third section is “reading,” which is the largest section. You’ll need to read five lectures and answer 50 questions.

For me, the hardest part of the test is the “grammar” section, although I try to improve every day.



I remembered that two years ago I didn’t feel sure about taking the TOEFL preparation class, but I challenged and pushed myself more than the abilities I had and now I feel so happy about my decision.

I hope I can pass the TOEFL test with a passing score.

Overall, passing this test is important to demonstrate the language skills learned in the classroom and to start college. You must have 500 points to

enter the university you want here in the United States or overseas.

Katy Herrera

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals

It had been almost two years since I came to America and I was always afraid: afraid of talking to doctors about my two baby daughters, afraid of buying groceries, afraid of any situation where I had to speak English. I felt a sense of shame and defeat. I thought that the day I would be able to speak English would never come. Even though I wanted to quit, I just clenched my fist and said, “Just try one more time.” And then the Stillwater Literacy Council assigned me a tutor who I will call “Bob.”

Bob edited my writing, pointing out what was wrong and what was correct and good. We read books and articles on whatever subject I wanted and we talked

about many topics so I could practice my English. Slowly I became less nervous about English. Even on days when my changeable mind was like the frantic weather, Bob remained like the sturdy old tree and we would do our lessons. Then something incredible happened.

I began to gain confidence, comfort, and the experience and knowledge needed to live in a foreign country. Today, I have many “Bob”s with whom I am comfortable speaking English. I even pushed myself and joined Toastmasters.

I also now know that learning English is not like cooking a dish, it is a long term project. It has taught me not to give up, but to keep moving, step by step. And even if I can’t always feel the improvement, I know I am going forward and getting closer to reaching my goals.

Keep Moving with Courage

My name is Kim. I come from Myanmar. I've been



Huai Kim

here for ten years. When I was 12, I had an experience that taught me about courage and working toward my goals.

One day when I was walking home from school, it was raining and I knew I could catch crabs near the river. I went alone and I caught many crabs, and then I had to cross the river to go home. Usually the water was very low and I could walk across easily. But that day, the river was very deep and very fast because of the rain, and it was starting to get dark.

I found a bamboo pole to find out how deep the water was. The water was very fast, and it almost pulled the pole out of my hands. I was very scared and didn't know how to get home. I pushed the pole very hard into the bottom of the river, and I took

very small steps. I pushed the pole forward with my feet. I had to hold my head back to keep my face out of the water. I kept moving very slowly and I got across the river.

I learned two things from this experience. First, if you have a goal, keep moving, take small steps, but don't stop. Even when it's difficult, it's important to keep moving. Second, we cannot succeed without help. Like the bamboo pole, many people have helped me.

Since I came here, I have had many goals. I am learning English. I got my GED and my American citizenship. And I want to go to college and get a job. All of these things take small steps and support from many people.

Huai Kim

OIC of Oklahoma County, OKC

Reaching My Goal



Dionicio Labra

My name is Dionicio Labra. I am 34 years old. I'm from the city of Juarez, Mexico. I arrived in Oklahoma on October 2010 with my wife and my daughter.

I started working as a house painter, a job that I did not like very much at the beginning. The painting job was very difficult. We had no house nor money, but I made an effort to learn that job and to get a better salary. I could get a better salary and another position in the company.

In 2013, my second son is born. At the same time, I started my own business. That was the greatest achievement in my life.

Now I have my own remodeling company, Roy's Painting.

My next goal is to learn English to speak well so

that I can take my company to the next bigger level. Therefore, I can pay for the college of my children so that their future is better than mine.

I am not a rich man, but I am very happy because I have good friends and a great family!!!

Dionicio Labra
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal is to Open My Beauty Salon Brand

My name is Chau Le. I'm from Ho Chi Minh City of Vietnam. I studied medicine in college and worked part-time as a hairstylist before I moved to America.

I have lived in the United States for four years with my family. I was happy to reunite with my family and for better living conditions here. This has given me an opportunity to dream my American dream.

I want to share my goal with everyone about my

plan to open a big nail salon chain here in the Oklahoma area. I love to socialize with customers



Chau Le

and make them happy. Interacting with others makes me happy and at the end of the day, I don't feel any stress.

In order to achieve my goal, I need to improve my English skills and save my money and unique ideas, as I gather experience with my job at a different nail salon in the local area. I want to complete my TOEFL course and pass my TOEFL test to go to Oklahoma City Community College.

Currently, I work at a nail salon in my local area and attend an English class part-time in the community. I hope to work diligently and study to become a professional hair stylist and save money toward my goal. I want to open a nail salon that can bring the best quality service to customers and a good envi-

ronment for my employees. I hope my business will improve my local area and help Vietnamese immigrants to have a good job.

Chau Le

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal of Citizenship

My goal is to become a citizen in the next year. I have been in the United States for 5 years—the country which has a different culture and a different language. Although it is not easy, I never want to give up.

I already set my goals step-by-step 6 months ago. The first thing I want to do is improve my English. It is good to connect with native speakers for opportunities to get better jobs. It might be harder than I thought.

The second step is to enroll in a citizenship class and try to finish it in one year. I keep that in my mind

every day because if I pass the citizenship exam, it will be an advantage in my life.

In summary, becoming a citizen is my goal. I have to be determined to do my best. I think becoming a citizen is one of the things I will be proud of.

Dang Le

OSCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goals

The most important goal I would like to reach is to become an electrical engineer. In order for me to obtain this goal, I will have to do well in college, learn about being an engineer, and gain real world experience.

First, I have to pass the TOEFL exam and go to college. I have to completely focus on this test. If it goes well, and I do get accepted into the college of my choice, my next assignment will be to learn as much as possible about being an electrical engineer.

I need to work hard in college to get good grades, because I need to transfer to a university after two years of college to get a bachelor's degree and eventually a master's degree.

Ngoc Le

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My First Car

Paying my first car off made me feel great, because I managed to do it in one year.

First of all, I worked at 3 different jobs. I worked from Wednesday to Mondays in a restaurant and in the afternoon in another one. On Tuesdays, I used to clean a house.

Secondly, I didn't have unnecessary expenses. I only bought clothes that I really needed for my job and always cooked at home in order to not waste money eating in restaurants.

Finally, I made extra payments every month to pay my debt off faster. I tried to save money up and the day of the payment I gave more than what had to be paid each month.

Overall, I feel great for having managed to pay for my first car in a year, working hard, not making unnecessary expenses and giving extra payments every month.

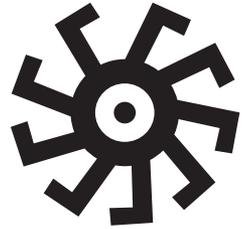
Orquidea Diaz de Leon
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Plan to Speak English Fluently

When I started to study my career in México, 25 years ago, I imagined speaking English fluently and working on my dream job, for example, a lawyer. But life is not always easy.

After I emigrated to the USA, I got married and had three kids. This changed my priorities.

Now my kids are growing up and I have more time for myself. It's time for me to start striving to reach my goals again. I wish to pass the TOEFL test to enter any college or university. I want to revalidate the studies I did in Mexico and then start to study to be an interpreter in courts.



My first priority is to learn how to speak English fluently. The first step is to learn 10 words each day.

Secondly, I need to read at least three pages of any book. In three pages, I can find plenty of examples to help me memorize the rules of grammar.

Thirdly, I can learn from any real-life event, such as going to a restaurant or to the doctor.

Fourth, I need to think in English. Once it's established as a habit, it will come out naturally.

Fifth, I watch movies with subtitles in English. The

simple idea is the more I play with something, the more I master it.

Finally, YouTube is an excellent help to learn something new alongside with language.

In conclusion, learn new words, develop a pace for reading, learn from everything, think in English, watch movies with subtitles, and watching English content on YouTube. The most important thing for me is to speak fluently in English, maybe not like a native-speaker, but someday speak in front of many people with confidence.

Araceli Lopez

OSCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Life and Goals

My name is Islia Lopez. I'm from Guatemala City. I always like to learn things that help me in my daily life. I try to keep myself occupied for the reason of dealing with my self-esteem.

When I was one year old, I got a disease called Polio. At that time, my parents did not take me to the doctor to give me a vaccine in time, and I got the virus in my legs. One was more affected than the other. My right leg did not work the same and it do not grow in the same way as the other one. I have always needed to use a special shoe with a 5-inch high sole to be able to level my walk a little.



Islia Lopez

This affected my life very badly. When I was a child, I suffered bullying. Sadly, with a pain in my heart I asked myself why I was having this problem. I wanted to be like all other normal girls and wear normal shoes.

My dad said to me one day, “Put in your mind that you have no limits in your body and show that you can do wonderful things in your life.” Those words helped me to move forward. Today, I am happily

married and I have two beautiful children. I think that if I had stayed in my country, I would not have everything that I have achieved here. My country is beautiful, but there are no opportunities.

My dream is to learn to speak English and read and write it very well, and I know I will achieve it! Never look at your faults as only bad; instead realize that they offer you help and that is a blessing.

Islia Lopez

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My GED Goal!

The most important goal I've ever wanted is to get my GED. It is the most important goal because I need an education to succeed in life, and be proud of achieving my goal.

After I get my GED, my dream job is to own a repair business. I plan to study for an auto mechanic career and look for that day to come. I'll be proud of what

I've accomplished because that's what my dreams have been for such a long time. It would be so awesome for my family to see that I followed my dreams.

Jose Lopez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Lily Lopez

I am Lily Lopez from Mexico City, Mexico. I was born in 1983. I am the only daughter and have two older brothers.

I liked school, but the teachers always told my mom, "Your daughter is intelligent, but very slow." I continued to make an effort so my parents would be proud of me.

I was not good in English or math. I would fall asleep in class. The teacher said, "Lily, why do you fall asleep in class? Is it not interesting to you?" I answered, "I don't like it and I get bored. I will never need English. I do not plan to go to the United

States.” The teacher said, “One day you’ll regret your words.”

When I started college, the first week my class was in English. I didn’t understand. I left the University.



Lily Lopez

At 19 I met a young man. He lived in the United States and was in Mexico on vacation. We kept in touch by letter and phone. During his Christmas visit, he asked me to marry him. I didn’t want to leave my family, but I did.

We moved to Altus, Oklahoma, and had 3 boys.

My first job was at a church. The ladies helped me learn some English.

I currently work at a foods company which has also helped me better my English.

We have built a family business.

GPLC started classes at my church and I signed up to prepare for my citizenship. I took every opportunity to study for my citizenship.

In January 25, 2019, was my biometrics, in April I had my interview. I passed! May the 21, 2019, I received my citizenship.

I am proud for what I have accomplished and want to get my GED.

I now know I have the ability to achieve it.

Lily Lopez

Great Plains Literacy Council, Altus

Personal Goal

Ask yourself if what you are doing today is going to the place where you want to be tomorrow.

When I was a child, I always dreamed of being a professional psychologist, teacher or working in a bank. I believed that happiness depended only on

that. To achieve my goal, I dedicated myself to studying hard and trying to always be the best in class.

Finally, after 15 years full of effort and dedication, I have a university degree that gives me great satisfaction. Also, I understand that happiness is more than having a university degree. It is enjoying what you do each and every day.

Lorena Lopez

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goal

I came to the USA from Chihuahua, Mexico. In December of 1988, I arrived in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It is a beautiful place to live. It snows a lot and the mountains are majestic.

I lived there for 6 years. And I worked at the hotel many days and nights as housekeeper. I worked even on the weekends.

On February 14, 2005, I moved to Las Vegas, Nevada. This place is too bad to live with my family because of expensive rent, food, and utilities. I lived there for 10 months.



Lucila Loya

Then I moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Oklahoma is a better place to live because everything is cheaper. I bought my own house. I did a lot of work as housekeeper, demolition worker, truck driver and mower who cuts grass on a farm. Right now, I work at the brazing department of an air conditioner manufacturing company.

I miss my country. I love Oklahoma but not tornadoes. Someday, I want to return to Mexico. I have a little family. My son is 28 years old. My two daughters are 23 and 15 years old. I have a grandson. His name is Johnny. He is 4 years old. My oldest son loves the heavy metal music. My daughter loves

Selena's music. Selena passed away 24 years ago. My daughter has never seen her. My little daughter loves the computer. She doesn't like to go to school. I study English at OCCC. My teacher is so funny. He uses Mexican food Chimicanga in conversation as an example all the time. His name is Yeol Kim. My partner Carmen is very friendly. This class is so funny. My teacher gives me candy whenever I volunteer for the conversation exercise. I love ESL at OCCC. Learning English is my goal I am working on now.

Lucila Loya

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

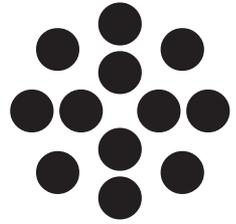
The Two Goals of My Dreams

Dreaming is the way to happiness!!!!

It has always been very easy for me to create computer and electronic things. I went to a technical school in Mexico and studied to become a computer

technician. It was very difficult, but I liked creating architectural drawings, making blueprints and beautiful houses. I told my parents that I wanted to be an architect, and they told me that I would have to work very hard. They supported me in everything.

After I finished technical school, I started a new job where there were many technicians and engineers. I had always liked everything about technology and engineering. When I was little, I always liked to repair things like the TV. Sometimes it worked, other times, not (ha ha). I also wanted to be an electronic engineer because I had always liked moving cable connections.



My two dreams were to be an engineer or architect. I always worked and studied at the same time. I was very sure of entering the University of Mexico and working to achieve my goal; either of the two careers I chose would make me happy.

But then I came to Oklahoma, and my life changed 360°. Now I'm married. I had thought about not studying after I got married, but I've changed my mind. I finished my GED and am in English class now. I'm thinking about studying to become a pharmaceutical technician and finding a good job.

I'm going to continue studying because I like it, and I want to follow my dreams. Maybe in the future I will study one of my two career dreams.

Life Is too short, so do everything you want, while you can! *It's never too late (to dream)!!!!*

Ericka Lozano

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

The Little Girl

Once upon a time there was a girl who liked to look at the sky, the sunrise, the sunset and the wonderful night.

She enjoyed listening to the birds' song and the crystal clear water running in the mighty river.

It was perfect harmony between colors, sounds, and fragrances.

One day she decided to express all that beauty that her senses captured on a canvas.

The girl mixed paint using a brush and with her little hands applied it on a cloth.

Soon she discovered how much she enjoyed the contact with nature and could reflect it in her art work.

After several years and having studied to perfect her painting technique, she decided to return to the

same place where she liked to go but what she found made her feel sad because there was only garbage, fallen trees, and contaminated water.

Then she began to use her art work as a tool to raise



Laura B. Malagon

awareness among human beings of the damage we are doing to the place where we live and saw us grow.

Now she wants to find the right way to spread her message across the world and propose solutions to stop affecting our ecosystem and live again in perfect harmony.

Laura B. Malagon
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

The goal that I'm working on is to pass the TOEFL test to improve my life and to get a better career. This is the first step in reaching my goal.

Then I plan to start college at OCCC. My dream is to be a dental assistant. I'm working very hard for my dream to come true. I teach my kids that any dream is possible if you work hard every day. You just have to trust in God. I try to be more pos-

itive every moment of my life. My personal motto is “never give up.”

I am choosing this career because I want to help my community know how to take care of their teeth. Passing this test will allow me to have a better life.

Bindis Maldonado
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

The goal I’m working towards is to become a nurse. The reason I want to become a nurse is because I grew up in a small village in Sudan where there weren’t enough nurses at the hospital.

When I was back home, my sister got sick and my mother and I took her to the village clinic. We waited for a very long time to see the doctor because there was only one doctor and one nurse working. I told my mother that one day I will be a nurse to help my people.

Before I completed school, I got married and came to the United States. I started working to settle myself down before I started going back to school because I still had a dream to be a nurse. After I settled down, I went back to school and took English classes. After I finished with English classes, I went to OCCC to complete the TOFEL test. After I complete the TOFEL, I will go to OCCC for two years to take nursing classes. After I graduate and become a nurse, I will work at the hospital as a nurse for a few years before I go back home to help my people as I promised And I will also make very good money.

Samira Mamour
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Becoming an Engineer is My Goal

Becoming an engineer is my goal right now and it has many steps.

First, I have to take English classes such as ESL-2, ESL-3, ESL-4 and pass the TOEFL.

Secondly, I want to apply for college and take classes in mechanical engineering.

Third, I want to get a job working at a car company. Summing up, being an engineer is a process that has many steps. I need to do more than just study English.

Sawn Lian Mang
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goals

The most important goal I've ever reached is getting my degree in marketing. I have also finished the first level of English class. The goal I'm working on now is to prepare all the necessary documentation to obtain legality in the USA. I also want to look for a new job with better benefits and the best payment per hour.

Completing this goal will make me feel better about myself and my family. It's the most important goal because, I can work in a good place and I could have my own business. My family has always supported me with the planned goals.

Rossana Marchena
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Next Level

Everyone in life has dreams; some great, others small; some short term, others long term. There are many steps to take to get from the dream to the destination.

I have been living in this country for three years and it has been an adventure full of emotions, meeting people from very different countries and cultures and trying to understand and adapt to the American culture. (Especially the food).

I can say that my way of thinking has changed a

lot since I have been here. Today I have a broader vision of life, of people, and also of my dreams. I have learned that each dream is achieved step by step, and by living in this country I understand that there is a bridge that I must for myself to cross that will connect me with my dreams. This bridge that will take me to the next level is the English language.

As a child I loved English, but I lacked the discipline to learn it as a second language. Today I am making three times the effort as before to learn new words, grammar, and especially practicing my speech. There are times when I have become discouraged, but when I think about my dreams and the need for English, I understand that this beautiful but sometimes confusing language will usher me to the next level, to the place where I've always dreamed of being.

Thanks to the help of the Oklahoma City Community College and my great teacher, today I have the

strength and hope that I can fulfill my goal of learning English and making my way toward fulfilling my dreams.

Marcos Agustin
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goal Made Me Feel Happy

One day my parents decided to come to the USA

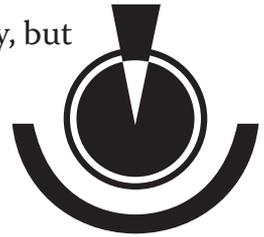


for a better life. I started working to help with my family's expenses, trying to survive in this country. I did not have time to study to improve my English. I got married and had two boys. I did not have time to

study then either; I had a lot of work. I dedicated all my time to my family, taking my boys to school and sports practices. Later, I got a divorce, and worked to survive with my children. They finished high school. Christopher and Jonathan grew up and

they enjoy the Marines. Now I can focus on myself and finish school.

I started taking English classes at OCCC, and I would like to finish the GED Classes and prepare to take college classes, so I can finish my dream and graduate as a teacher. I know it's not easy, but it's not impossible.



Also, I like to enjoy my life. I'm ready to travel around the Americas. I want to know my country Mexico, the USA, and South America.

My life was not easy, but I survived in life. We can stay focused on what we want and work on it. It's never too late to learn and achieve your dreams.

Beatriz Marquez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching Our Goals at My Second Home

We began our journey moving from Colombia to the US three years ago and we are still working very hard to achieve the stability of our family.

Colombia is a beautiful country, rich in flora, fauna, amazing landscapes, and talented and caring people. Unfortunately, we have political issues that affect the economy and social matters. I firmly believe that one should not become attached to only one place. One should travel, adapt, and learn from others and grow spiritually. There is a quote I repeat to my daughters when they are homesick: “Home is any place as long as we are together.”

Leaving behind our family, friends, and our roots has not been an easy journey. We miss all of those every day; but we were determined to seek our goal of a future for our two beautiful girls where they can have a good education and have a happy child-

hood; a future where they can go to college and be valued professionally; where they can develop their abilities in sports and arts. I guess that's what all parents wish for their children.

We have been learning not only how to speak the English language, but to think in the language, adapting to a new culture. The listening and speaking skills at the beginning were very difficult for me.



Elizabeth Gomez Marquez

Now, through the OCCC ESL program, I became able to have a fluent conversation with confidence. We still have a long way to continue improving our English as a second language.

This big country, the US is filled with great professional opportunities, filled with people from all around the world and surrounded by nature in every state. We should be remaining together as a family,

being good citizens, working hard to achieve our goals for a peaceful world for our children.

Elizabeth Gomez Marquez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

The Same Way

When I was about 8 or 9 years old, I liked very much to play *“little school”* with all my cousins. My twin sister and I were the teachers while our cousins were our students. When someone asked me, *“What are you going to be when you grow up?”* I always answered, *“I want to be a teacher.”*

But I couldn't go to college because my family didn't have enough money to pay for my studies, and even if I worked, I couldn't pay.

Months after I finished high school, I met a very handsome man who is now my husband. We have two wonderful and smart children. They are kids

with special needs, so now I'm the teacher of that beautiful pair. I love my two little students!

Cecilia Martinez
OCCC Adult learning Center, OKC

My Life in the United States

My name is Maria Martinez. My husband's name is Martin. We have two children, Jose and Mariela. My family and I came to the United States ten years ago.

I was born in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. I thank God for the strength he gives me every day to work. Martin works hard and is a good provider. Some of the money I earn is sent to Guanajuato for my mother and sister, who has Down syndrome. The money helps them live a better life.

My mother is 68 and still works. I am very grateful to my mother for paying to send me to school in Mexico. My education from Mexico has helped

me to speak and write better English. *So, thank you, Mom!!*

I work cleaning houses. The first person I worked for and admire is Francis Herron. She is 100 years old and lives in a nursing home. I enjoyed the con-



versations she would have with my daughter while I cleaned her house. They would discuss their day, eating candy and watching TV. That is why I want to learn more English. Even now when we visit her she

always tells my kids “Even though you are grown always remember me and carry me in your hearts.” Through her, I obtained more jobs. I’ve always wanted to have a conversation with the people I work for, not only consisting of work. This work has helped me provide a better life for my family.

GPLC offers ESL classes at the library and I attend to be able to speak and write in English. Elizabeth

Benavides is my current tutor and has helped me tremendously in my studies.

My family is the reason I want to learn better English, and continue to have a better life for us.

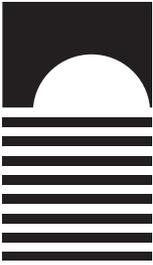
Maria Martinez
Great Plains Literacy Council, Altus

My Life in the United States

My name is Valentina Martinez. I am a wife and mother of five girls, Perla Rivera, Selena Rivera, Andrea Rivera, Zitlalith Rivera, Giselle Martinez, and one son, Osmar Martinez.

I was born in Mexico, and was lucky to have been able to attend school. That helps me now in learning better English.

My first marriage was a very abusive relationship. My ex-husband was a drunk and it ended up with threats to my entire family. I left Mexico for the



United States fourteen years ago. I visit as often as I can. My older children still live there, as do my grandchildren, but my family is here and work brings me back home to Altus, Oklahoma.

I work hard cleaning houses. I also do farm work. Many people say I work as hard as a man. I feel that's OK. My husband does farm work also and we have a few farm animals of our own.

In November of 2018, I began ESL classes with the Great Plains Literacy Council in Altus. My goal is to learn better English and eventually apply for my citizenship. I work hard and stay committed to the goal I have set for myself.

I have always told my children to study hard and get all the education they can so they won't have to clean houses like I do. Cleaning houses is honorable work but I want my children to climb that ladder and reach for the stars.

I thank God he pulled me through the rough patches in my life and brought me back to my family.

Valentina Martinez
Great Plains Literacy Council, Altus

My Reading Story

Since I have been in the Literacy Program, I have gotten my driver's learners permit.

I am hoping I can go take my driving test so I can have my driving license. Then I don't have to have someone ride with me every time I go somewhere.



Lawana McCalister

When I started the program in 2003, I was at a 4.5 grade level and my comprehension was at a 5.0. Now I am at a ninth-grade level and it is getting better every week. I am now teaching kids at church. I like doing the lessons for the kids every week to teach the kids. Now I don't always have to ask my son for help much anymore with my work.

I have spoken at five new tutor trainings and at *Chapters*, our Literacy program's fundraiser. I have helped at my church speaking on Sunday mornings. I have also helped with the services on Saturdays and I teach the children in Celebration Place on Sunday nights.

I have been in the literacy program for 16 years. I have worked on what my tutor gives me to work on and I do work on my own by myself. When I started, I was at a fourth-grade level. I have a long road but I keep on working on my reading and writing every day. The more work you put into your reading and writing the more that you will take away from what you've learned. The more you work on your skills the better you are going to get in life. Your world can be unlimited and more doors can be opened to you when you can read.

Lawana McCalister

Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service, Tulsa

Reaching My Goals

I have reached so many of my goals by being in the literacy program in Poteau, OK. When I started the program, I started with an addition math book. Now I have just finished a fraction math book.



Savannah Mcgee

I took the reading portion of the HiSET test, and I passed it and made a score of 11. My reading scores on the CASAS test have also improved from where I started to where I am now. I passed all my visual literacy books also. I never thought I could achieve all of these goals!

Mrs. Hawkins and Ms. Barbara have always been there for me when I needed help with something. Hard work and effort pays off in the long-run!

Savannah Mcgee

TLI of the Literacy Council of Leflore County, Poteau

Starting Again

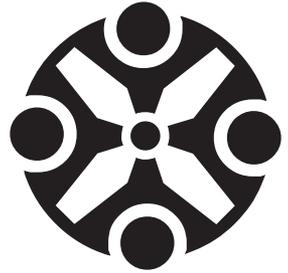
Why did I decide to study English at 55? Since I was born, I have heard on many occasions that women should be good and obedient, excellent housewives, mothers, and wives. If you study a career, never forget what your role is at home.

At age 14, I began to question everything, including the concept of God and mine as a woman. I rebelled internally and made the decision to go to the University to be independent someday. I also sought to find the spirituality within me which has sustained me in every experience of my life.

At 18, I went to Veterinary School in Mexico. All my dreams depended on finishing my career. At age 21, married and pregnant with my first child, I still continued studying. My husband went to work in another city, but I ended my career and stayed home with two children. I had a terrible fear of going out

into the world until my third daughter was born when I decided to divorce and have a career.

There I was with 3 small children, without money, without a husband and without work. I started again. I got a job at the Department of Agriculture. I studied, attended to the house and children, and



grew up with them. Ten years later I was Director in SAGARPA (Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fishing and Food) headquarters, traveling a lot. On a trip, I met my current husband and 3 years later I emigrated with my children to the USA, and I started again.

Today at age 55, my life is full, I live in the countryside, I work, I read, and I enjoy everything. I decided to start a new stage: to study another career and to overcome my last great fear, speaking English.

Maribel Medina

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals

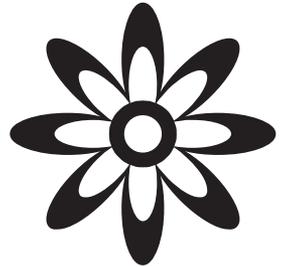
I'm from Mexico and I traveled to the United States in 2011. It was a very difficult period of my life. When I came to live in Bartlesville, I did not know the language or anyone in the city. I began to doubt myself! Did I make the right decision when leaving my country? I asked God to help me to be patient because I was already in the United States.

I started going to a church where I met some people. I did not have a car or a driver's license. I had to walk everywhere.

I felt very lonely in the daytime because my children went to school. I felt very sad without my family and began to pray. I want my children to have an opportunity and be able to study. I kept praying, asking for patience. I said to myself, "Everything happens for a reason. God will not abandon me."

I got work in a pillow factory. I met many people

who taught me some words in English. I wanted to get my driver's license. I knew it was not going to be easy because all the material was in English. In the end, I achieve it with the help of Literacy Services.



The literacy services at the library helped enormously to teach me English, and they also encouraged me to be brave to speak to a native English speaker. Now that I have managed to learn a little more English, I can go shopping, go to the doctor and drive my car. I am happy to understand the natives of America when they speak to me.

I always had a lot of faith in God. I can only say through my experience, “fight for your goals, because when you propose it you can do it.”

Laura Mercado

Bartlesville Public Library Literacy Services

Becoming an Accountant in America

First, I want to have a job as an accountant in an office or bank in America. I have graduated from the University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. I have a Bachelor of Accounting and a Masters of Finance and Banking. I worked at a bank in Vietnam for about 10 years; I would like do the same in America. I hope to have a chance to make contact with some trained accountants here.



Em Nguyen Ngoc Minh

Second, to become an accountant in America, I must understand and study about important accounting topics here such as: Corporate Accounting, Corporate Reporting, Cost Accounting, Tax, Risk Management, and Financial Analysis because it is different from my country. I need to have a deeper knowledge about them, plus I must love it. Then I

will be successful. My goal is to study and obtain an accounting certification in America. With help from organizations, this is a life for me and my children.

Finally, I will always pursue my goal. I don't want to give up on anything, especially myself. I think when you like something, you can do it and be successful.

Em Nguyen Ngoc Minh
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals

Learning English is the goal I'm working on now.

First, English is an international language. You can go to other countries and speak English. It is the language that can be understood in many places. Learning English is indispensable for the people in my country because, not everybody speaks the same exact language.

Secondly, English is the business language around

the world. Most books, research, and internet information is found in English. Now, online communities like MySpace, YouTube, etc. offer people a way to make friends.

Finally, when people with different languages come together, they commonly use English to communicate. For example; to get a better job in the U.S. and to be able to go to school.

Overall, I'm working hard to reach my goal. I'm learning English by watching TV, attending an English class, listening to English music and by practicing every day with friends.

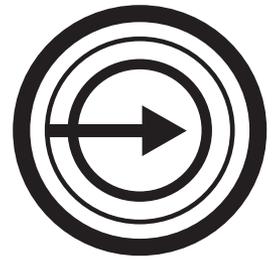
Khin July Moe

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Job in a Darden Restaurant

Employed in a restaurant is the most stressful job I ever had.

First, this kind of work is very heavy and physically hard. For 7 hours a night, I wash dishes, glasses, and silverware in an industrial dish machine. Every rack of dishes contains 30 pounds of ceramic, glass, and metal.



Then more bad news about the job position—it's the pay. I am earning a little above the minimum wage at this time, \$9.00 an hour, and I have to schedule over 40 hours in a week to get a reasonable and sensible take home pay.

Finally, I don't like the working conditions. Sometimes I work by myself. That means nobody else helps in the position—extremely hard, because just one person must put in, take out and deliver all dishes, glass, and silverware.

Overall, I don't like this job at Darden restaurant

because working there is extremely physically hard and the work environment is bad.

Arturo Montanez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Better Opportunities



Sergio Monzon

I arrived in the United States in 2015 in search of better opportunities, in a country where the language is totally different and that's why I needed to go to school and learn the English language.

I began attending English classes at OCCC in 2016 and am still studying there today. I have learned the language very well, and I know that learning English will give me more opportunities in this country; to interact with different people, and to fulfill my dreams of having a business or a profession.

One of my long-term goals is to use my architec-

tural degree from Guatemala to have a real estate construction company or to build houses, buildings, squares, park etc.

Sergio Monzon
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals

I have reached several goals this year.

Helping my sister, Ali. She encourages me. I make coffee and breakfast for her every morning. I'm making chicken and noodles tonight.

Kay, my tutor, has helped me reach my goals. I can read better. I'm still working on counting money.

I ride the bus by myself when I go to work at the Senior Citizen's Center. I wash the tables and I help my boss, Linda.



Margo Morales

I keep our house clean. I do the laundry for my sister and I feed the dogs every day.

I will make new goals next year.

Margo Morales
Duncan Area Literacy Council

Reaching My Goal



Irma Moreno

My name is Irma Moreno. I grew up in San Miguel Allende, Mexico. It's a beautiful place where the people walk in the streets. I love that! I went to elementary school, middle school and part of high school there, but when I was 18 years old, I immigrated to the United States.

My life in the United States is blessed because here I hear about God for the first time. I met my husband 18 years ago, and he's an amazing man and a good

father. We bought our second house five months ago. We're really grateful to God for all his goodness.

Now we have two family businesses, and some people work for us, which is great because many people eat from there. I love helping people because somebody helped me when I didn't have anything.

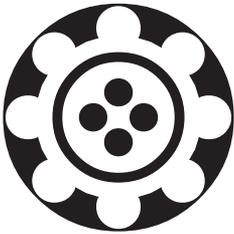
Irma Moreno
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Story

Let me tell you about my story and how I came into this country. In 2001, my wife and I decided to move to the United States with our three children. My brother lived in Oklahoma City, so I wanted to come and be close to family, and I also needed his help to get started.

I remember getting my first job at the auction within the first month, and then my second job at a restaurant as a busboy. Then I realized that I needed

one more job to be able to pay for all of our expenses, so I got another job at another auction detailing cars. Having three jobs, the only time I was home was Monday afternoon.



It was really difficult having to start all over again and ever more difficult to go to work for somebody after I had been self-employed for years. I did what I had to do to buy my family a house and also saved money to start my own business. We were all in our family business, but now it's my wife and I, and my kids are working in their own jobs. My kids are grown up now and are on their own, so I feel good about being able to give them a better opportunity. I'm also thankful to be able to work for myself to make a living even though it has been very challenging.

What I want to do now is to get ready for retirement and I want to start traveling. I feel like I worked really hard throughout my life and now it's time to

enjoy myself. I am here today to improve my English. This is important for me to accomplish.

Akbar Motian
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal: An Automotive Technician

Imagine that one day your car is broken down, and you want to fix it by yourself. However, you don't know how to do it.

My goal is to become an automotive technician.

At first, I have to improve my English. For example, I can go to TOEFL class and ESL class. I can learn many things and I can practice my English in the ESL class. Furthermore, I can learn more about listening, grammar, and reading to pass the TOEFL test in the TOEFL class.

Second, I have to go to Oklahoma Community

College or Metro Technology Center. I can take many courses and study hard in order to obtain a degree or certificate.

While I study these courses, I can intern at the car dealership to earn more money and get more knowledge about how to repair cars. In conclusion, my dream is to become an automotive technician.

Chuong Nguyen

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Future Goals

The goal I'm working on now is to go to nursing school. I have been waiting for my older children to be in college while my youngest finishes elementary school.

The first thing I need to do is study English very hard this summer to be ready to attend TOEFL class in 2020. I have to finish that class in one year and then take a test. I will do my best to pass the TOEFL test

because I need to understand English better so that I can continue my education.

I plan to start nursing school at OCCC in 2020. I hope to achieve my nursing degree (RN) in 2024. My English instructor has encouraged me to set and reach my goals. I want to thank him for helping me reach my goals. He is a very patient, and encouraging man, and has helped my understanding of English. He also has helped me realize that education and knowledge are very powerful and liberating things. This course has helped me tremendously and I hope to never quit learning.

My goal is very ambitious, and I will work very hard over the next two years to understand English better, so that while I'm in nursing school for the following two years I can achieve my goals and graduate from OCCC with honors and go to work as an RN.

Ha Nguyen

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Become a Physical Therapist

When I was around ten years old, I occasionally went along with my mother as a volunteer to visit a hospital in my village. I saw lots of patients, children and adults, with signs of pain showing on their faces. Some patients had to use crutches for walking around. Some had much difficulty reaching for a simple cup of water. The most devastating were patients lying on beds waiting for help from nurses. Each time after I left the hospital, I wished that someday when I grew up, I could somehow help those patients to relieve their pains and comfort their lives. Those pictures have stayed in my head for many years. Those vivid memories have motivated me to become a physical therapist in the future so I can have opportunities to help unfortunate patients in all phases of healing, from initial diagnosis through the restorative and preventive stages of recovery.

During my high school years, I liked to learn about the human body and read books about that whenever I had chances. After I graduated from high school, I got great advice from my parents and my brothers and sisters for going into the physical therapy field. I also got great encouragement from my friends and they provided me with information about several schools that offer physical therapy programs. I have started to do research for the program requirements, cost of tuition, financial aid available, and to learn about the college where I plan to attend.

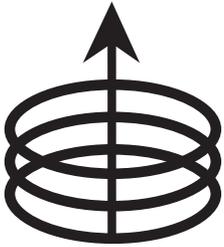
I determined that I will need to try hard in school, get licensed, and ready for real experiences.

With my plan laid out, I have feelings of nervousness and excitement, but I remember my parents said, “No guts, no glory.”

Hoang Nguyen
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

The Goal I'm Working for Now is College

I've lived in America for 3 years. I feel happy to be here. And, I would be happier if I could be in college and become a nurse.



I graduated from the university in my country and then got a good job. I left all good conditions behind when I came to America with the thought that everything would be fine. A couple of months later, I found that it would not be fine at all because of the different culture, different language. I feel like a little child living in America. I have to learn everything again. The most difficult thing for me is the language. Why does language become the most difficult thing for me?

In my opinion, when I live here, but my English is not good, I am not confident to do anything. Sometimes, people don't understand what I say even

just simple things and it makes me feel I'm like a little child who is learning to talk.

Now, my goal is college and then a nursing degree so I have to try my best to study English. Besides, if my English is good, I can help my 12-year-old daughter in her studying. It's really hard for me to reach my goal if my English does not improve.

Luckily for me I can learn English for free with enthusiastic teachers here, and there are a lot of English books to read at the library. These things help me a lot on the way to get my goal.

Linh Nguyen

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching the American Dream

Have you ever thought about opening a business? It is the dream of a young girl who grew in a poor village in Vietnam, and that little Vietnamese girl is me.



My name is Thanh Nguyen, and I was born in an ordinary farmer family. From an early age, I had to work hard to make a living every day. Because of it, I have a dream that one day I will have my own business. That ambition has followed me all the way to America, and I call it “My Little American Dream.”

To achieve my goals, I have to start from scratch and work my way up, and it will not be an easy feat. First, I need to learn English to effectively communicate with my customers and business partners, and I will take English and business communication at the local community college.

Secondly, I have to learn management in order to improve my business services. To transform that ideal into reality, I will take an apprenticeship at my aunt’s salon in Dallas to learn the operation side of the business.

Third, I have to get financial assistance from my local banks. I have to go through various banks asking for a loan.

Finally, I am also trying to take some advanced beauty classes although a high level cosmetology class is not easy.

The most important goal that I want to reach in my life is opening my own business. I will try my best to make my dream job come true. In my opinion, I think that the more I learn the more, I will succeed in the future.

Thanh Nguyen
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Becoming a Criminologist

My biggest goal is working in a prison as a criminologist because I have always liked to help and listen to people.

In Mexico, I studied criminology and criminal psychology. The first thing I need to do to be able to achieve my goal is learn to speak English very well to later validate my studies in this country.



Achieving my goal would make me feel proud of myself because it has always been difficult for me to speak English, but above all, I would be very happy to have a job in this country about what I studied in Mexico.

Brenda Nunez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Cook in a Restaurant

I worked in the restaurant of the University of OKC. I worked full time. I was in the kitchen.

The goal I am working on now is that I want to learn American cooking.

First, because it is an opportunity to find a better job, because we live in America.

Secondly, because I can speak more English with my manager, supervisor, and co-workers.

Thirdly, another reason is that it will help me make friends outside of the people from my country.

Fourth, learning and speaking English fluently will give me the work experience I need.

Irene Depri Olilo
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Story

The most important goal I have ever had, the goal I am working for now, is learning to read. My goal makes me feel good and proud of myself. I have learned that there are important things in life, like an education, my family, my health and reaching my goals.

My goal in life is to better myself, for me and my family. I want to change for the best.

Roberto Olivarez
FCI Literacy Program, El Reno

The Person That I Want To Be Again

My name is Arturo Ortega. I arrived from Venezuela a year and a half ago. When I arrived in the United States, I realized that I needed to speak English in order to continue growing professionally. For this reason, speaking and writing in English is my main goal.

When I can communicate in English, this will open many doors in the professional field. I would like to work again as an oil dealer as I did in my country. I know that the road is not easy, but with effort and dedication, everything can be achieved, and with the help of family and friends, I can reach that goal.

I feel that I have come a long way since I arrived in this country. I know that every day I can communicate more and better. I know I will be able to achieve it, and I hope that in less than a year I will be able to develop my profession in this country of opportunities.

Arturo Ortega
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Never Give Up On Your Goals

The greatest advice I have ever been given is, “Don’t give up what you want most for what you want now.” I never would have imagined myself following this advice, until 2 years ago. I believe in this advice. For this reason, I have established goals for myself:

Improving my communication skills

Becoming more professional

Becoming a skilled citizen



If I learn English I will improve my opportunities to communicate with others, especially my grandchildren and my friends. To be able to understand and enjoy all conversations makes me feel happy and satisfied! I feel very proud to have the opportunity to study English as a second language. It is something that I thank the Community College and its proficient teachers for. I really like the concern and patience they have for me. I feel this has helped me learn a lot.

My second goal would be to have opportunities to continue preparing myself in my chosen professional career. I hope also to be able to compete in a job where I will see the benefits or rewards of my efforts in salary and job satisfaction; that is to say, finding a job I really enjoy. The effort required should not prevent me from achieving my goals. Success, not failure, is the only goal.

My third goal is to become a United States Citizen, and I will achieve this with the help of God.

All this will make me feel fulfilled and successful. Making and acting on these decisions will help me reach the highest mountain of my life.

My desires and dreams will help me overcome all obstacles. I believe in this!

Dora Perez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goals

One of the most important goals that stops me from thinking deeply is: how to learn English. I've tried so hard that sometimes I think I'll never be able to do it.

Determination and constancy are the bases that I consider important to be able to complete such an achievement. Determination because sometimes I

feel faint in the attempt and perseverance because as the saying goes, the one who perseveres reaches.

This is one of the goals that I have proposed to finish, and I hope it will be successful. So many times, I feel frustrated when I cannot express what I feel or just want to start a conversation. I hope to be constant and determined to achieve this goal that I have set for myself and so am attending English classes that take place at Oklahoma City Community College whose class is taught by Lynn Swanda.

María de la Luz Perez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

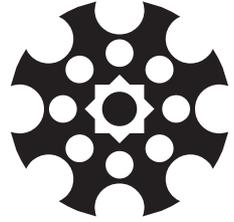
Reaching My Goals

As a child I always had many dreams and goals. Now I realize that I cannot have all I want; in life things change. Since in life people have ups and downs, they change their dreams and their goals. I also think

that we all should follow our dreams to be successful in order to accomplish those goals in our life.

My childhood dream was becoming a teacher, so I went to college to get a teaching degree.

After a while, I saw that I started to have interest in other stuff. To add to this, I also love to experiment with hairstyle and make



up, so I can make people feel beautiful because it increases their self-esteem. Also I would love to try working as a detective, to try to solve a problem, to seek out knowledge and the truth of things. To assure that I will succeed in these goals, I am trying to learn more and I'll start college so I can decide which one I'm really interested in.

I have been inspired to include these in my ultimate dream because I find that I am capable of achieving these goals and I have talent for them, especially in cosmetology. As long as I stay focused and achieve my checkpoints, I should complete my goals.

Overall, I would love to make a decision on how I want my future to be, but I know that it would be difficult to fulfill my dream.

Never give up and keep persevering throughout your life. Would you let your dream never come true? I will not let my dreams control me, but I will make use of this dream to inspire me.

Fatime Rama

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Daughters and My Goal

My goal from the beginning was to enter school. I have always dreamed to understand and write English, but I never had the time. I would always work and work to give my daughters everything that I could give. They have always been my focus and I pushed back one of the most important things in my life, "Learning English." Now that the time is passing by. I see my daughters in school and I under-

stand that the most important thing is not giving them the best, but education. From that moment, I decided that it is time to learn English.

My daughters always asked me for help with their homework and I always tell them to ask my eldest daughter. Because she understands better and I don't. It made me think that it is not an excuse to leave the eldest to help her sisters because the mother can't.



Ana Ramos

I always think the same thing—I need to learn English but I also told myself I have no time. One day my daughter told me she could no longer help because she had to go to college. So I had to help. She gave me the number to call OCCC but I was scared to call because what if they answer in English? One day I said, “No more excuses” and called because I need to be there for my daughters.

Thanks to them, I'm reaching my goal even if it is

not easy. I know it is not impossible if I take it step by step. I am now learning and don't want to give up. I see how much time I have wasted and regret not going to school sooner because I am now learning. I can even use a computer. I am happy now and my goal is to reach even higher.

Ana Ramos
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

My name is Sunil Regmi. I currently live in Edmond with my brother who is a practicing registered nurse. I am going to share my plans and goals with you all as well as how am I going to achieve them.

While talking about my future goal, my brother has become my great influence in my life. I am very pleased to hear about his hard work and dedication towards his profession. His passion towards his profession and willingness to help people in need has

a great influence on me to set up my career as a nurse, so I am on my way to achieve my goal.

In order to achieve my goal, I need to learn how nurses work and what they do. Before that, I need to pass the TOEFL, which stands for Test of English as a Foreign Language. This will help me to improve my English skills and make me a better person. That's why I am taking TOEFL classes to improve my English skills.



Sunil Regmi

It is not that easy to pass the TOEFL, but I must practice it every day. Sometimes negativity comes in my mind what if I couldn't pass the exam and failed to reach my goal then what would happen to my dream?

For me, failure is not an option. My positive thoughts and motivation won't let me down. Millions of people in this world are working hard to achieve their goal, and so am I. People tell me I am smart, hard-

working, and a goal-oriented person. All it takes is time and passion. Slow and steady wins the race.

I believe in myself that in the near future I will become a nurse. I will contribute my knowledge and skills to help people and become a good example in health care setting.

Sunil Regmi

OSCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Fighting in Adversity



Fr. Graciano Reyes

When I was a child I had a dream to be a priest, but my family was very poor and from a very humble place so it was not easy to study. With great difficulty and overcoming all the obstacles, I continued my studies. I finished high school.

Next, I went to study philosophy and theology for

seven years. Nothing was easy, I studied hard and was not discouraged by the problems.

Finally, I was ordained a priest. I have been working for the people of God for thirty years. I am very happy and proud to be able to help and guide all the people who need it. It was worth the sacrifice. I continue with my priestly formation and I'm still learning English, because the training never ends.

Fr. Graciano Reyes
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

My goal is to learn English and speak it well to be able to study cosmetology and understand English in my classes. It has not been easy, but I know I can reach the goal to graduate in the career I want.



Diana Rivas

I chose cosmetology because ever since I was little,

I have loved it. Now I like it even more, but I know that I have to learn English in order to achieve my dreams. So, the goal I'm working for now is learning English to be able to understand and speak well and thus be able to achieve my dreams that I crave the most!

Diana Rivas

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal



Angelica Rivera

My name is Angelica Rivera. I was born in CD Juarez, Chihuahua. I decided to move to the United States because it offers more opportunities. In 1997, I arrived in the US with a bag full of dreams and goals. Many of my goals, I have accomplished. Back in Mexico, I studied accounting. My next step

is to get my Masters in accounting. In 2003, I was in real estate and a loan officer, as well.

I am proof that when you set your mind up for success, everything will fall into place. No matter how hard it was for me to overcome obstacles, I managed to stay focused and accomplish my goals. I am finally living my American dream.

Angelica Rivera
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

The Only Failure in Your Life ... Is Not to Try What You Long For

Nine years have passed since I came to live in this country. I still remember when I started studying English, beginning from the first level and dreaming one day to be at the TOEFL level. This path has been slow but constant and very focused on reaching my main goal.

This country has given me a big opportunity and

I'm really excited and grateful for my teachers and Oklahoma City Community College, and proud to be part of the Hispanic Community in it. Also everything I have learned from the language has made me feel more comfortable with myself, and I feel great enthusiasm to go ahead setting new goals and achieving them.

The year 2019 is very important to me, because now



Belinda Z. Rivera
de Rodriguez

I feel that I'm almost reaching the goal that I dreamed of since 2011, and now my mind has been changed and I have a new big dream—to pass the TOEFL and go to College again, going ahead step by step to improve some specific skills that are needed

for an opportunity to get a Master's degree in the English language, now that I have obtained the official recognition of my Professional Studies from my native country.

It's very important to me to feel fulfilled and satisfied with myself, Also I would like to be remembered by my children, by my husband, by my family and friends, as a strong and determined woman, fighting for my goals and my dreams, trying to always be an example to my community and helping those in need—without leaving aside my roots, and always proud of the values and principles that I received from my parents—which at this stage of my life I have reaffirmed going to the right path next to God.

Belinda Z. Rivera de Rodriguez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals

My name is Lilliana Rodriguez and in the course of these years, I have achieved some goals.

My first and most important goal in my life was to raise my daughter with values as a single mother.

I also have achieved financial freedom by working 22 years in financial company, and learned to drive.

I am currently working on learning English; It is a very important goal because I need to improve my skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. I also want to get my citizenship and my driver's license. I need to speak more English and start thinking in English, by watching television in English, and studying more English.

To achieve each of my goals I have counted on the help of my family, my husband, technology, my company, the school and my commitment to myself. I am happy when I achieve my goals. It helps me think positively about my future and other goals.

Lilliana Rodriguez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals

The most important goal I've ever reached is to

improve my English. Since I moved to Oklahoma from Puerto Rico, I have known that I needed to speak English. When I was in school, they taught me, but I did not put much importance on learning the language. Now, I know how important it is to be bilingual. I pray to God every day to help me understand my second language.

I remember one day I went with my husband to a restaurant and I ordered something, but when the waiter brought the food, it was not what I ordered. I told my husband to call the waiter and let him know. He called the waiter and said to him, “My wife wants to tell you something.” I looked at my husband and wanted to kill him because he knows I cannot speak English very well. My husband never helped me translate because he said, “You have to learn English; we live in the USA.”



Maribel Rosario

Sometimes I'm frustrated that I cannot talk as fast as most Americans, and I am trying so hard to learn the language. Maybe it's because my brain is not the same as when I was young.

Maribel Rosario
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Nothing Is Impossible

I grew up in a low-income family, but still with the dream of being able to practice what I always liked, medicine. Even knowing that it was almost impossible due to the economic situation in my house and with three other sisters studying. My parents decided to support my decision to enter the nursing school, "One-step at a time." they said.

At last, I entered nursing school. I had great plans and I focused all my energy on studying. I tried hard and got good grades because it was not my dream to be a nurse. My dream was to be a doctor, and I

knew I would have to try harder and learn more, and I did it for a year.

One day my mother was sick, and for three months she was hospitalized. My father took care of her and with big expenses, everything was more difficult. When my mom died, I was a teenager. Her death put me into a deep depression. With her absence I wasn't able to focus at school. So, one day I made one of the worst decisions of my life. I dropped school because I felt that I no longer had the strength, the desire, or the concentration to study.



Cinthya Paola Ramos Rubio

Today, I regret truncating my career. I stopped following the dream I had as a child and suffered the consequences of my bad decisions. Maybe I will never be the doctor I dreamed of as a child, but I really do not know because life take turns, and takes us to different paths that we never imagined.

I will continue studying and maybe one day I will be able to accomplish my dream about nursing, because now as an adult, I understand that, “*Nothing is impossible.*”

Cinthya Paola Ramos Rubio
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

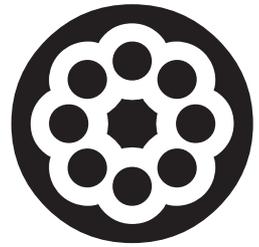
A Different Culture

I arrived in the United States 20 years ago. I met my husband and after two years, we got married; then we had our first baby, a boy. A year and 3 months later, I was pregnant with my second baby, a girl.

During the pregnancy, everything was healthy for me and normal; that was what I thought. My daughter was born and to my surprise, she was born with a cleft lip and palate! Immediately, I had many thoughts cross my mind about whether she would be bullied or not because in my birthplace I received much bullying. I also thought about what her school

life would be like with this physical defect. Even though she had two surgeries before her first year of school, I had been running round in circles in my mind about her, and even though we raised her with a normal life, as an independent and brave girl, I didn't stop feeling fear for her first years of school.

And again to my surprise, she received the same respect that the others girls received. I'm really thankful! I feel very fortunate that my daughter was born in this country where she received all the medical and spiritual support she needed. With the love of her family, she is a happy and thriving girl.



Ramona Rubio
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Dream in Oklahoma

The goal for which I am working today is to pre-

pare myself to study for two years at the university. I know it will be complicated, but not impossible.

In 6 to 10 months, I will be taking the TOEFL test. It is a requirement that I need to be able to study at the university.

I will validate the courses of mathematics, science, and other courses related to my career so that my stay in the university is as short as possible.

I have very strong reasons to do it because I am a person who likes challenges, but I am also prepared for the difficulties and obstacles that will arise in the future.

Part of my plan of action to be successful is to make medium-sized goals so that I do not feel bad in case I am delayed in doing it.

One of those goals is to learn more grammar in English so I can write better. I also want to read

newspapers and books in English to better understand the texts of the different courses.

I have bought a blackboard where I write the things I want to achieve and how I am going to enjoy them.

That way I think it helps to motivate me every day.

I hope to tell you how I am progressing in my career to success soon.

Luis Angel Saavedra
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goal

The goal I'm working on now is learning English as my second language. It is a very important goal because I want to have a better life and the power to communicate with people in this country. I also want better job opportunities and to have better com-



Isabel Salinas

munication with my daughter's teachers on parent-teacher conference day.

It will help me to come to school often and with my English class and practice at home with my daughter. I will also listen to music and TV shows in English.

It motivates me to learn, so I will not depend on other people.

I want to learn and be brave enough to speak. More than anything, I want to lose the fear of speaking English.

My daughter is helping me reach this goal as well my ESL classes at OCCC.

Reaching my goal will make me feel more comfortable with myself having the power to communicate with the people in this country.

Isabel Salinas

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Learning English

My goal is to learn English. I chose to learn English as a goal because it is beneficial to me and my family. Reaching this goal would make my life easier because I live in a country where the main language is English.

I know a little bit of English right now. In order to get to this goal, I am taking English classes and practicing at home. I also watch TV in English. I don't have an exact time for when I will finish learning, but I hope it is soon.

When I learn English, I will feel more comfortable speaking to people who don't speak my native language. It is hard, but I think it is possible. Learning English is my main goal.

Erika Sanchez

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goal

The goal I'm working for now is to learn more English than I already know. I'm Pabla Sanchez. I started studying in the OCCC adult learning classes in 2012 and I am still here. When I enrolled for the class, I understood English only a little.



Pabla Sanchez

I want to tell my story at OCCC Community College. It is hard to learn English, but I am happy now because, for all those seven years in the OCCC, I learned to speak, write, and read better than before.

I can't say that I speak well because it is still hard for me. But, I can imagine that I will speak English very well someday.

I have cousins who have lived in the U.S. for 38 years. They don't speak any English at all. I have lived here for almost 20 years, and I always help them when they have doctor's appointments. They

call me whenever they need translation such as doctor's appointment.

My goal is to understand English and help people who needs translation. When I started working at the motel for the first time in 2005, the manager didn't understand Spanish. The manager never wanted to help me because I can speak English only a little. She always told me that I need to go to the school and learn English.

I said to myself that someday I will speak English very well and help other people to translate who need help. That's the goal I am working on right now. That's why I am still learning English at OCCC to learn more. I want to say that I give thanks to all the teachers at OCCC Community Outreach for the help and patience with me.

Pabla Sanchez

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Better Late Than Never

It is difficult for an adult to learn a different language. If you have a job, you have no time to study. If you have a family, it is hard to find time to go to a class, or if you are a housewife like me, it is very difficult to dedicate time to learn new things. I am an American



Saydee Saucedo

citizen, and it is really uncomfortable when someone asks me why an American citizen doesn't speak English. I want to be accepted like other citizens.

I was born in California, and in my home we only spoke Spanish. My parents had come to California looking for a better future. I was three years old when my parents decided that we should go back to Chihuahua, Mexico because my dad's sister was very sick.

After I got married, my husband got a job in Colorado. Living in Colorado was hard for me

because I really didn't understand English. So I started an English class, and after a month, my teacher invited me to work as a waitress in a restaurant, and that helped me so much. At first, I only learned the phrases that waitresses say, and I started to put more attention on pronunciation. Then I got pregnant and had health problems, so I had to quit my job and stay at home with my baby.

When my kids were little, I could help them with their homework, but now they are older and it is much harder for me. So I decided to go back to study English again, so I could be more involved in my kids' lives. I would like to meet their friends and talk with their parents. Also, I love to tell jokes and make people happy, and it is hard to show my personality when I can't express myself. With the help of my tutor, I will do it this time.

Saydee Saucedo

Northwest OK Literacy Council, Woodward

My Goals

Before I came to America, I accomplished many of my personal and professional goals in China. Do you want to know what my goals are now living America?

First, I moved to America only a short time ago. English is my second language. One of my goals is to improve my English. Sometimes, I give myself too much pressure to speak English well, but I know this needs both time and practice. I will improve my English as quickly as possible, so I'll do the best I can!

My second goal is to develop my business. Everybody knows money is necessary, but it is not my primary goal. My primary goal is to provide value to customers and help others along the way. This means to help those in need! They could be homeless, injured, military veterans and unemployed people who are open to the opportunity to work.

The third goal is to become better all-around—to teach yoga, Chinese, English, and dancing. In this way, I can help people improve their quality of life, including their happiness, health, and everyday life!

I know I can reach all of these goals over the next few years! It will take hard work and dedication, but I am already on the road to success!

Hongxia Shan
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

A Letter of Goals

Dear Adran,

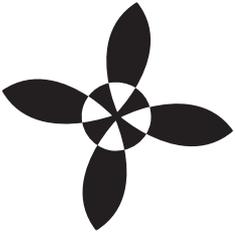
How are you doing? I'm missing you.

I'd love to share a funny thing that happened to me lately. It is about my daughter Elsa's soccer training.

Once, she had a game on a Saturday noon. And on the flyer, I saw, "You need to take the Jersey." And in

my mind, dried beef appeared. Then I bought some and took it to the field.

But I didn't see dried beef. I see they all wear a green and white T-shirt, the sports uniform. So I went to the front desk of YMCA and the staff said: "Do you need the Jersey, what size?" At that moment, I realized that I was confused between "Jersey & Jerky."



But it let me reflect on the learning method of English language on me. I learn words by textbooks, by dictionaries, not by the daily life and real communication. Jersey and Jerky look so similar and I misunderstood. Things like that happen very often. Sometimes, I feel our method of English learning & teaching is a kind of wasting time. These are very ineffective. I want to do some changes when I go back.

A late wish of Happy Mother's Day!

Wish you young and beautiful forever!

Sincerely, Lara.

Lara Shen
Stillwater Literacy Council

Mr. Fix It

As a young man, I learned to fix things and I liked to do it. I decided to study something related and I went to University in Mexico and got a degree in Engineering. Before starting the University, I already knew how to weld. In the University, I learned to weld much better, to do plumbing and also electrical work.



Adrian Silva

I liked welding because my Dad had been teaching me since I was a child and I liked to make structure with the weld. In Mexico, I had a lot of structure

work in the fences of the houses, and that helped me learn to weld.

After I learned to do electrical works in the University, I liked to fix and make electrical installations. In my job I do a lot of electrical work. I also do different activities; maintenance in food systems, air conditioning, repairing anything that is failing, and doing plumbing work.

I really like to fix things, it's a good job, and I like what I do. What I like to do most is welding because that's what my Dad taught me and it's a memory that I appreciate a lot. I believe that I chose the right profession for myself, and I wouldn't change being a Mr. Fix It.

Adrian Silva

Northwest OK Literacy Council, Woodward

Reaching My Goals

The goal I'm working on now is to have more con-

confidence speaking English. My husband and I moved to Oklahoma in 2017. As soon as we got here, I lost my confidence because I couldn't understand what people said. At first, I was so nervous ordering food at restaurants, buying things at the stores, and even getting coffee!

I've been learning English since I was 13 years old. In Japan, we mostly learn grammar and reading. We don't really practice speaking in the class.

I've been studying English for a long time, and I thought my English was okay; but I realized I needed to work on it really hard.

To accomplish my goal, I'm doing a few things. I'm taking an ESL class at OCCC. I've been learning a lot. I have a lot of opportunities to speak in the class. Most of my classmates have great goals and they are working hard to accomplish them; this motivates me to complete my goal. Another thing that I've been



Chihiro Smith

trying to do is socialize more. Going out with the group has allowed me to both practice English and make new friends. I'm also watching my favorite TV show which helps me to learn English. Whenever I hear a word I don't understand, I look it up in the dictionary after pressing the pause button.

In the near future, I'd like to be able to talk on the phone with confidence and enjoy small talk with people. Once I achieve my goal, I'd like to work on my next goal, to get a job.

Chihiro Smith

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching for the Goal

The goal I'm working toward now is getting practice in order to succeed on the TOEFL. Practice is important to achieve success on the TOEFL. Practice has included exercises on writing, comprehension, listening, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The pur-

pose in taking the TOEFL test is to measure my progress in English in order to prepare for professional opportunities.

The tutoring sessions have focused on various skills. One of them is writing, and I have been working on essay structure including the elements of theses, paragraphs, and conclusions. Working on essays has improved my writing and vocabulary. I need to work more and more on it. I have to read more to learn expressions, but I think I'm on the right way.



Nadezda Smith

During the tutoring sessions, I have worked on comprehension. For this practice, I read a passage that is similar to that from a college-level textbook. The tutor asks questions about the reading and I answer the questions. I can say I feel more secure in my understanding and comprehension than writing.

I have practiced listening to samples of professors'

lectures and answered questions. These samples have included sociology, theater history, and art history.

Learning new vocabulary and pronunciation skills are essential. For example, my previous tutor helped with pronunciation. I had trouble pronouncing words which start with “S.” I used to have problems saying my husband’s name Steve Smith because it sounded like Esteve Esmith. Another problem I used to have was pronunciation of “V” or “B.” I now can distinguish “M” from “N.”

Part of the tutoring has included focus on thinking though my natural reaction in Spanish and communicating more clearly in English. In conclusion, this tutoring has helped me work toward and celebrate my goals.

Nadezda Smith

Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service, Tulsa

What Is Next?

After finishing the University as a public accountant in Mexico, my question was, what is next for me? I had it all without knowing it. I lived with my parents, I had a job, I had a family, I had a boyfriend, I had a car, I did what I liked. I could have stayed in that time, but the next step was to get married to my boyfriend of 7 years.

After getting married I had everything again. I had a husband, we had our house, I had my parents, I had more family, I had a new job, and I had the same car. We had a stable life; we could stay like this for a long time, but I followed another step. My husband and I moved from our country, because my husband got a better job in the USA. But, we had to leave everything we had in Mexico and the most difficult and important was our family.



Priscilla Soto

At first, I didn't know what was next. My surprise was that I liked the new country. We have a different quality of life because everything is quiet. We also have the opportunity to learn a new language, English. I still have everything. My husband and I are together, and even if my parents and my family are far away, they're always in our hearts.

I don't ask myself what is next? At this moment in my life, the future doesn't worry me anymore. I'm fine with what we have and how we live. I will not worry about what is next. I will live and enjoy what I have.

Priscilla Soto

Northwest OK Literacy Council, Woodward

Pursuing My Goal

When you are a child you hear this question a lot, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Everyone wonders how his or her life is going to be.

However, I think I know now how my life will be. I have many goals for my career and life-goals that will help me find new paths and dreams to pursue and get further on in life.

I have had many personal challenges: one of them was when I had to move to the USA and adapt to the culture; another obstacle has been my job, because there are no English speakers. And this slowed down my progress in learning the English language. But I am sure that my constancy will help me overcome these challenges.



Wendy Meza Soto

One of my goals is going to college and getting my degree in architecture. Right now I am working on it. I already have my GED. This was the first step, and now I am attending ESL classes to improve my English. I think my next step will be to take a TOEFL class to prepare me to enroll in a university. I don't

know when this will happen, but I will keep working very hard to get the job of my dreams.

The career that I choose will be the beginning of the rest of my life. Every decision that involves education or a job impacts what I will become. And I want to be able to look back and be proud of what I have accomplished.

Wendy Meza Soto
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

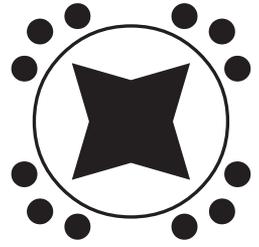
Reaching My Goals

I am Iris M. Red Sullivan, resident of Oklahoma City, state of Oklahoma, United States of America. I am currently a student at Oklahoma City Community College (OCCC-ESL). I am a lawyer and notary authorized by the Supreme Court of Justice of my country of origin, El Salvador.

I want to express my joy for having fulfilled my first goal and one of the most important that I have

achieved since I have lived in the United States and it is opening my legal office where I exercise the notarial function with people of Salvadorian origin.

Simultaneously the goal for which I am currently working is to achieve my proficiency with the English Language. I am studying in this ESL program at OCCC to



speak, write, and understand this language politely.

You wonder why my priority is to educate myself in this language? Here are my goals:

I wish to incorporate my profession of lawyer and notary of my country. For me to obtain the possibility of studying some subjects in a university in Oklahoma, I must have approved and certified myself with the official exam of the US of the English domain called TOEFL.

I want to enter the university that gives me the best

scholarship to study and thus to study my profession and to be authorized as a lawyer of this country.

When I become United States Attorney, my desire is to serve and work for the Supreme Court Justice of this country.

I will talk about the satisfaction that life has given me. It is the reward of the daily struggle to reach our goals. I am sure there are many more goals, such as being courageous women, leaders in our homes and serving as a guide and example to our children.

Iris Red Sullivan

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Becoming a Chef

My name is Jun. I'm 23 years old. I've been studying at OCCC for 2 years. The most important goal I want to reach is to be a chef.

When I was 7 years old, my parents and I moved to

the new apartment. They worked so hard, so they didn't have time to cook lunch and dinner for me. I was trying to cook. I knocked at my neighbors' door and would ask them, "Can you teach me how to cook?" "Of course, little boy," they said. That's my first time to try to cook for my parents and me. They were so surprised and said I did a really great job. I felt so happy. And I'm so glad to see people enjoying my food.

So now, I'm studying at OCCC. That's what made my English much better. And then I'll try to get into the GED class. If I can pass the test, it will be a great way to go to college or culinary school. Maybe I can study how to be a good chef from there. I am excited. I can imagine that people will be into my food. And I hope to be a restaurant owner, so people can hangout and meet new friends.

That's my goal: to be a top chef.

Junhui Tan

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goal



Lois Thurston

I have been coming to Creek County Literacy Program for 5 years. I have reached my goal. I can read and now I am teaching others to read. It makes me feel good knowing that I can help other students to learn to read.

Lois Thurston

Creek County Literacy Program, Sapulpa

My Car

Buying my first car was an amazing and difficult experience.

First, the day I bought my car I was very happy, because I had to work a lot to get it. For example, I

worked two jobs, one in the morning and one shift at night to be able to get it. I worked overtime and saved a lot of money by not going to restaurants and parties.

When I went to buy my car, I felt happy and excited to see my effort come true.

Jose Tigula
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals

When I arrived in the United States of America I had no idea the language barrier would be such a challenge. After the first year, I understood that if I did not speak English, there would be few job opportunities.



Iraidis Tineo

Two years ago, I enrolled at OCCC and my goal has been to learn to write and speak English.

I feel very happy because every day I learn more as I strive to attend classes and do my homework on time.

I still need a lot, but with effort and perseverance, I will achieve my goal of being able to speak English. Then I will be able to get a degree at the university, so I can get a better job and have my own business.

Iraidis Tineo

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

My name is Camila Torres and I am a persistent and enthusiastic woman. I like to help people with their self-esteem.

Before I could help people, I needed to believe in myself. Now, I can believe that people can do anything in their life. That is the most important goal I've ever reached.

The goal I'm working on now is to learn better English to grow my business, and in a few months to learn about American citizenship. I want to travel as soon as possible to Guatemala. This is my dream and I believe that I can do it because every dream can be reality.

Reaching my goal made me feel very happy!

I'm going to see some special people in my life, and I am determined to do whatever it takes to achieve my dream.



Camila Torres

Camila Torres

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal Now

Learning English is the goal I'm working on now. I consider it essential to have an optimal quality of life in this new destination of my life.

First of all, it is important to be able to perform better in the activities in everyday life, such as going to the bank, shopping, or attending medical appointments.

Secondly, it is very important to speak English to become a citizen of the United States, and because it is as a respectful way to appreciate this country and culture.

Finally, I currently don't need to work outside the home. I want to be prepared in case I decide to do so in the future.

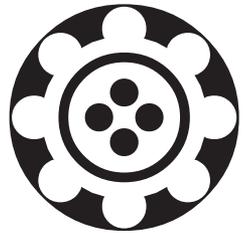
Overall, it is very important to master the language of the country where I live to achieve the best quality of life either in daily activities, in studies, in any future work, and to appreciate this country.

Ingrid Garcia Tovar
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching my Goals

Being a single mom has been hard for me. After 10 years of marriage, I have to start all over again. I have never experienced this kind of hardship before, but I am managing.

As a kid, I always dreamed of meeting the right person to settle down, have children, and grow old together. But life doesn't always turn out the way you wanted. In the last two years, I had to learn to adjust to the life outside my home. It was very difficult for me at first, but I managed to adjust to the new culture. However, prior to my divorce, I was a stay at home mom and that was the only place I knew. I'm determined to improve myself and show my children that everything can be accomplished if you are willing to work hard at it.



Even though I was scared to be on my own, I was very fortunate to have good friends that support

and help me through the tough times. As a result, I started taking some English classes to help me learn to communicate more effectively and prepared me to join the workforce. In addition to the English classes, I've also completed my nails tech certification. I know that doing this on my own will help me build confidence in myself to be a stronger and a better person.

In conclusion, being a single mom and moving to a new country has been extremely difficult for me. While I have found many rough spots along the way, I am learning new trades and working on my English so that I can better myself and provide for my family. I hope soon to find that my hard work is paying off.

Anh My Tran

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Citizenship Goal

The most important goal I've ever reached is citizenship in the USA.

It is the most important goal because it has helped me. It has gained more benefit for me. For example: It is easier to get a job; easier to get Medicare when you are 65 years old.

It is for all these reasons that I made my goal.

Reaching my goal made me feel happy and confident. This is my goal.

The most important goal in my life.

Hoai Thu Tran
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Dream Is Becoming a Nurse

My name is Nga. I am from Viet Nam. I have a big family with seven people. I have two sisters and two

brothers. My sisters are older and my brothers are younger than me.

In 2018, I moved to the USA with my family. I have just lived here about one year, and now I have a first job as a waitress at the restaurant.



Nga Tran

I just have a part-time job because I want to have time to study English. My English is so bad, and I need to improve my speaking and writing skills. I also want to speak English fluently so I can work with people from different countries.

My main purpose is to go to college and study nursing. When I was a child, I had a beautiful dream that I will become a nurse in the future.

In fact, I cannot implement this dream. As all the students in my country, when you finished high school you can choose the major and the univer-

sity you want and you have to pass the test. I studied but I was not lucky to pass the test, so I studied at another university.

When I graduated, I got an administrative job at the financial company. I liked this job, but it was not my dream; my dream is to be a nurse. Nursing is an interesting career; it would also be a great feeling knowing that I would be able to help many people.

Now that I have come to the United States, I will start a new life and make my dream come true. I know it will be difficult, but it's my dream and my first goal is to pass the TOEFL during the next 2 years. I only hope that my path will bring me lots of success!!!

Nga Tran

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals

Almost one year ago, my family moved from

Vietnam to Oklahoma. I grew up in Vietnam so that's a big change for me; I never thought that I would leave my own country and live in a foreign country. Everything happened so fast so I didn't have time to prepare myself. Language is the big-



Ngoc Tran

gest barrier for me at this moment; I got a first job at the Vietnamese restaurant near my house.

I work as a waitress; my duties are to take the order, serve the meal for the customer, and clean up. In the first

days I worked there, I made lots of mistakes. I took a wrong order because I couldn't hear what people were talking about because they spoke so fast.

Although I have studied English in my country, it's really different and new for me, even the words I already know. I was kind of embarrassed. I felt like I'm not good. I thought, "Would people make fun of me?" Then I talked with my cousin and she said,

“I’m not the only one.” She went through that feeling when she came here, but she said to give it time and keep trying.

I realize that my important goal is to study English first; not earn money, not get married. So I took an ESL class and now I can understand better. I would like to go to college, but first I have to pass the TOEFL test. I know it’s not really easy, but I think I’m still young and have a lot of time to do what I like. I know that America is the land of opportunity and fairness, and we can continue studying at any age.

Ngoc Tran

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals for My Children

My name is Elia. I’m from Mexico, and a mother of four amazing children; 3 daughters, and 1 son.

Their names are Victoria, Adriana, Valentina, and Donovan.

First, I would like to talk about my son. He is autistic which is a neurobiological disorder of development, but that doesn't stop him from being the



outgoing person he is. He's the light of my eyes and the greatest love of his sisters. I also want to thank my daughters for always being there and supporting their brother.

I know it has not been easy, but fighting and walking together has made us stronger. Even though all of this has been difficult, it has also helped us to be better people and me to be a better mother.

On the other hand, I have always tried to learn the English language. I took GED classes. I completed my exams and obtained my diploma and now I'm in TOEFL classes. I need to transfer my nursing diploma from Mexico and see what else there is to accomplish my goal of becoming a nurse in the

U.S. I am a firm believer that we must always strive, overcome, and learn new things.

Therefore, I believe the sky's the limit, and when we want to achieve something, we can do it. I would like to be a role model for my children so they know that no matter what situation they are in, it's always possible to achieve their dreams and become better people and fight for what they believe is right.

Elia Vazquez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

When I arrived in the United States of America, I had no idea how the language would be. After the first year, I couldn't speak English. My job opportunities would be challenging.

Four years ago, I enrolled at OCCC. My goal has been to learn to write and speak English very well.

I feel great because every day I learn new things. I attend classes and do homework on time.

I still need a lot, but with better effort and perseverance, I will achieve my goal. I will be able to get better jobs and speak English. Then I will be able to get a license at the university, and get a better job and my own new business.

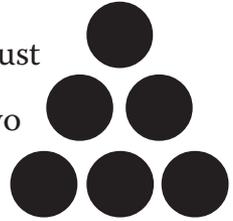
Maria Vazquez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Dream

My greatest memory as a young girl was going to school. While most kids just played during recess, I always played 'teacher.' My aspiration now is get my Bachelor's Degree in Special Education. On the other hand, my career vision is one day to be able to provide free special education at a low cost for families in communities that are marginalized in United States.

Somebody I used to know asked me why I wanted to be a teacher. This was easy; because I love children and I think it's the best way to start, to make this world we live in a better place.

For me, being a teacher will be more than just a job. It's my passion and my dream. Two things that motivate me are my daughter, who has a friend with special needs, and my amazing English teacher. When he is teaching us, you can see he has a lot of passion for what he is doing. That is why I will never give up.



I want to serve my community which doesn't have access to education. Part of my dream is to accomplish my career as a teacher and establish free special education.

I am sure that if I don't finish my bachelor's degree, all my goals will remain dreams. I will have to work hard in school to make my goals reality. For me, becoming a special education teacher means serv-

ing those dearest to my heart and that's a cause worthy of the hard work necessary to achieve a little girl's dreams.

Diana Velasquez
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Becoming a Cosmetologist

When I was a teenager, I always liked to cut and style hair. When I would baby sit my little nephews and nieces, I would ask my brothers and sisters for permission to cut their hair when it was too long. I also cut and dyed my mother's hair when she needed it.

I need to learn more English and finish school so I can go to cosmetology school and practice more. I also would like to get my GED and obtain the cosmetology license so I can start cutting and styling more hair.

When I do everything I need, I can start my dream

of being a cosmetologist. I will feel very happy, excited, and proud of myself every day.

Elizabeth Villa
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Certified as Medical Assistant

I felt great when I became a certified Medical Assistant because it is a good job option to have in the United States. First, it is possible to have an excellent and flexible schedule. For example, you could work part-time and therefore have time to study English, so you can get a promotion soon.

Secondly, salaries and compensation benefits are great. Starting salary is from \$15 to \$18 per hour.

Finally, you get to know a lot of people from staff, medical personnel, and patients. This might allow you to obtain knowledge about the field and to enjoy your job and socialize more.

Overall, when I was certified as a medical assistant, I felt very happy because it is an excellent job with good schedule, salaries, and opportunity to meet people.

Marlyn Villalobos
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Job at Walmart

Working at Walmart, I had a new work experience.

First of all, the work was physical and customer service. For 9 hours a day I made a daily pallet that had 70 boxes approximately. I had to take the merchandise and place it on the shelf. Each box contains 15 pounds of desserts.

The second feature of my work is customer service. I should be in front of the bakery in the afternoon to take daily orders in the department

Finally, I consider that you have good working con-

ditions. We must take a 15 minute break every two hours and also we should take lunch after four hours for 1 hour. In that hour, I share with my friends and I have common interest with other workers.

Overall, I enjoy my work at Walmart because it has been a new experience for me, in terms of having a physical job, customer service and working in good conditions.

Merlyn Villalobos
OCCC Adult Learning Center

My Goal

When I was a young girl, I always dreamed of becoming a doctor, but my father's culture was that women shouldn't study, and I never had his support to further my education.

Thanks to the support of my mother, I was able to study in a short accountant career program. It was

the best option I had since I was very young and it was something I enjoyed.

I never had the opportunity to work in my career. We had to immigrate from our home country of Mexico to have a better quality of life. Now my goal is to learn English. My most important reason to learn English is my three children. My two oldest children are now in college. They are examples that with sacrifice and hard work, things can be achieved. I'm a full time mother and wife. It's difficult for me to learn English because I have a thousand things to do, but I will not give up, for my family.

Erika Villanueva

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Becoming a Student: My Truth

In the course of my adolescence, I did not have the opportunity to study. I think that sometimes, it is not for everyone.

I studied in high school with a lot of poverty. I liked school and I had good grades, but for my parents, it was not possible to pay for school. I have eight brothers.

My parents separated, and for my mother everything was impossible. I got tired of erasing my notebooks to write in them again. I fell in love with looking at the big and new notebooks and pencils of my classmates. Even so, I finished my secondary school. After I left school, I got married, but my relationship failed with time.



Now, I have four children and a man who loves me. We work hard to survive. We are adults who learned respect and honesty with ups and downs and many shortcomings.

I am standing here looking for my opportunity. I am happy. Life smiles at me. Learning English is my present and my future. I have noticed and experi-

enced the frustration of people who do not understand or speak the language.

I will study and support whoever needs it. I will reach where my opportunity now allows me.

I appreciate the support of my teacher, Annette B., for her talent, intelligence, wisdom, and for making us feel important.

Ernestina Vital

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal

I am Maria and it's my job to communicate with residents to take food orders. I have three daughters and have been here sixteen years. Setting goals gives me a long-term and short-term motivation and the confidence that I need to achieve higher and more complicated goals. I have fixed many goals for myself, some of them I have accomplished, but I am still working on many of them.

One goal I have is to be better organized. I want to be able to manage my time more effectively when it comes to taking care of my children, working, education, and other aspects of my life. It is difficult for me to do this and accomplish everything that I have to do every day. I am taking English class this semester, which has allowed me to have more time with my children. And this is important these first years of their lives. I also have more space being able to learn on my own time.

Education is another important aspect of succeeding in life. Without some kind of education, it is hard to achieve the skills needed in the world. This brings me to my next goal which is to pass the TOEFL to be able to study nutrition.

My mother has always taught me about the importance of family and its value. I love my children and want them to have the best in life. This is why another very important goal of mine is to give them

all the opportunities I had through my family, and even some I did not. I want to offer them many things like a good college education. I also want to offer them a nice place to live in a good neighborhood.

Maria Vo

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Great Ambition

Today, I would like to disclose my great ambition that I've never reached before.

You know, I have studied about the renewable energy in Vietnam and Germany since 2007. Every two years, I have had an opportunity to go to Germany to study and visit some renewable energy projects such as biogas, biomass, wind energy, mini-hydro power plant, and especially solar PV farm there. In Germany, the government has a plan to shut down all nuclear power plants so they have to promote

the renewable energy to compensate for the lack of energy in the future.

I have had experiences to develop one wind power plant in Vietnam. I have spent 10 years studying and developing the wind farm project in Vietnam. This project was installed in 2016 and began to operate in the end of 2017.



Phung Vo

Now, I have to move to the USA because I want to study more about solar energy that I love so much. I have a plan to finish my studies about solar energy at one of the good universities in the USA within the next 2 to 4 years. I want to become a solar energy advisor in the near future. This goal is really my great ambition because I am very old now. I have not enough energy and time to study hard as young people, but I have to try my best to complete it as soon as possible.

At present, I am focusing to study English because

my English is very poor. You know, without English, you can't reach your dream goal.

I hope I can finish my ESL and TOEFL in 2019, so I can enroll in a university the next year to reach my goal in time.

Phung Vo

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Life with Faith

I had a wonderful childhood until the day I lost my dad. My life fell apart. I felt like I lost my best friend. I went downhill after that, but that's not all!

The next year, I lost my grandma and my niece. My life just didn't feel whole anymore.

I started drinking and smoking and was a horrible person to my mom.

I got in a relationship that my dad would have never approved of. My boyfriend was strung out on drugs

and verbally abused me. I was in this relationship for 8 years before I had my first child. A year after I gave birth to my beautiful daughter, I realized that God gave her to me to help me know that there were better things in this life than to be put down like I was every day.

The father and I split up for a year before I gave him another chance to prove that he was better than before. That's when I got pregnant with my second child and he ended up going to rehab for help. Needless to say, I have two beautiful children that God has given me to love and to show me how much better I can do in life.

I am now in literacy classes in Leflore County getting my GED to better my life and my childrens'.



Trasea Westfall

Trasea Westfall

TLI of the Literacy Council of Leflore County, Poteau

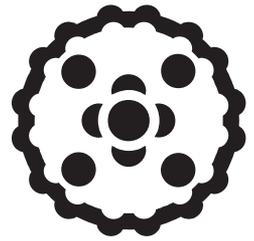
Rise Above

Growing up with a learning disability was hard. I was teased, talked about, picked on, and called names because I couldn't read or write. As I reached middle school, I really struggled. I didn't want to go to school anymore so I started ditching classes and playing sick. I was in the eighth grade and only 14 years old when I got pregnant. My mom encouraged me to stay in school and get a better education. She was a single mother and worked two jobs to take care of me and my brother. With two jobs, it made it hard for her to sit down and help me with my homework. She was always at work and my father wasn't even around. Because of this, I ended up repeating eighth grade.

After I had my baby, I didn't go back to school until I was 17. It was extremely difficult since I had been out of school for so long, so I only lasted a month. Over the next four years I had two more children.

I started working in a nursing home as a nursing assistant in 1983 to take care of them. In the next ten years, I had my last child and continued working as a nursing assistant until I received my certification in 1994 and became a CNA in 2004.

My goal now is to get my GED. I enrolled in Community Literacy Centers classes to learn reading comprehension, math, and spelling. I am determined to stay focused and consistent to improve my reading skills, hoping to get my GED by 2021.



After all those years of struggling, I feel like I have accomplished most of the goals I have worked hard for. I give all of the honor and glory to God for giving me the courage, boldness, and understanding that I needed to achieve those goals. The next step will be to enroll in Rose State College's nursing program to become a certified LPN. I believe my life's

calling is to take care of people and I love what I do.
I wish to eventually become an RN.

Angela Woodward
Community Literacy Centers, Inc., OKC

The Goal

The goal I'm working on now is to understand jokes that native English speakers tell. I used to watch comedy shows in my language and laugh a lot and also I liked to talk about funny stories with my friends, but now, I don't.

I started working last year. Sometimes I have to train new workers. Training in English is also hard for me. I use gestures and drawings to explain the jobs, but I often can't give a satisfactory explanation to them. I feel sorry for that, but fortunately they are nice and try to understand what I'm trying to say.

Joking is good for knowing each other and makes us feel that we are a team at work. I listen to their

joking carefully. It comes suddenly and too fast to understand. The speed is not the only problem but also the culture and backgrounds are different.

Even though I hear the words, I don't get why they are so funny. I have had this situation many times at work.

I don't know how much time it would take hearing jokes before I would understand them. At least, I have to keep trying to do my best. It's rare when it happens but when I laugh at the same time with my coworkers, I am happy.

I hope I can experience this more in the future.

Eriko Yamada
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Reaching My Goals

I lived in a communist country for 4 years. There

was no freedom. Finally, I decided to find my goal, which was freedom.

I come from Vietnam. I was in the South Vietnamese



Philip Yang

army for 5 years in the front lines.

After the Vietnamese revolution, we didn't have any freedom for four

years. I escaped to Malaysia. From

a Malaysian refugee camp, I came

to America. I got my freedom.

First thing I needed to do was look for a job, make some money for my family. I found the first job and second job. I worked two jobs a day, seven days a week. Five years later, I found my professional job as a machine operator. I worked on lathe machines and mill machines in a company called Blastrac Preparation Group. I worked there for 30 years. I worked hard and I was responsible. I won a company award one time in 2003, and I was very excited!

I worked in that job, month after month, year after year, until I was 66 years old and I retired.

Today I pick up my backpack and go to ESL class 2 days a week. At home, I do some chores, watch TV, and do some homework. In the summertime, I go fishing to kill the time. I love the life of freedom that I have found in the USA, and I really enjoy my retirement, but I still love to learn new things like improving my English!

Philip Yang
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Becoming a Manager of a Cleaning Company

I'm working in housekeeping in a hospital so I see the importance of cleaning. I like helping people and being part of the hospital staff team.

My goal is to become a manager. To accomplish my goal, I need to become a citizen, keep going to ESL

classes to learn English, get my GED, and learn at my work.

Sometimes, I'm frustrated that it's not easy, but I'm excited. I believe in myself.

Nora Zermeno
OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Believe In Yourself

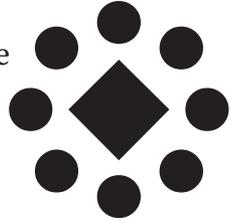
The key to reach your goal is to depend on yourself. If every day you aim to do things with a purpose, you will reach your goal.

My name is Cai Zhou. My family and I came to the USA 15 years ago. I could not have a job that satisfied me because I barely knew English. I felt hopeless.

One snowy day, I was excited by a fluttering which was the first time I saw snowflakes. I went out and made a snowman. I heard the sound from the sky

and I looked up. A flock of birds were flying in the air. The birds can fly freely and survive in the freezing weather. I thought my situation was not worse than the birds, so I should act positive.

I planned to continue my career as a nurse here. Learning English was a priority to reach my goal. I started to learn English in many ways. I went out in social areas and communicated with people in English. I enrolled in OCCC ESL classes.



Using a computer, I read and listened to news on internet. At the same time, I studied medical terms in English. When I was able to understand and speak more English, I took a basic nurse aid class. After I got a CNA certificate, I worked in a nursing home. My communication skills and medical knowledge improved. A few years later, I passed the nursing board's registered nurse test. I continued my RN

career in the USA and made my life different. I am happy in my work.

We do not need to be afraid of failure. When you set up your goal, you keep working on it and do not give up. Believe in yourself and you will be a success!

Cai Zhou

OSCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

My Goal is to Get a GED

A GED is an internationally recognized test. If you pass the GED test, you will earn an Ontario or USA High School equivalency certificate. A GED can help you get a job more easily.

A GED is important because it helps you to get a better job than someone who doesn't have a GED or didn't graduate high school. I want to get my GED because I want to get a better job in the future. I also want to get my GED because I don't have a diploma.

My plan to get a GED is to keep attending school, learn English from classes at OKC Community College, and move up to the level where I can get my GED.

In order to get my GED, I need to work hard and do all my school work. I need to get good grades. I also need to pass all the tests. I will need to go to school everyday to get full credit. A GED is as important as getting a high school diploma.

Trying to get a GED is the same as going to high school because it takes time, learning, and meeting goals. You have to meet goals by the end of the school year. Getting my GED requires me to move to a new level every school year. I will work hard to get my GED.

Zung Zung

OCCC Adult Learning Center, OKC

Poetry

MOM

To you, Mom

That has been told overnight that your son has
Autism.

To you, Mom

That this diagnosis hurts and changes the way
people treat you.

To you, Mom

You live with your depression, and when your son
is close you paint your face with a smile, to
avoid his anguish.

To you, Mom

Who fights with all your strength so that the
future for your son is better.

To You, Mom

That God has entrusted to you the best of his
angels, that his love and innocence will infect
you with joy.

To you, Mom

You are love, tenderness, and patience! God will
give you the strength to follow your path.

To you, Mom

Despite all reason, you keep trusting in God, and
this will give rise to a hope that motivates you
to continue!

Elisa Aguinaga
Community Literacy Centers, Inc., OKC

My God

You are the reason why I can live.

You are the reason why I can love.

My light inside this dark world.

Never will I put anything above you.

When I'm in pain, you're there to heal me.

When I'm not understood, you always feel me.

When I'm lost, you bring me back.

When I run off course, you put me back on track.

When I'm asleep you bring me dreams,

and my dreams bring me smiles.

They take me away from being in prison.

Forever will I remain your child.

When I'm alone you're by my side

on this never ending ride through life.

When I'm confused, I can count on you.

My God, my Lord, my Savior.

Bryce Powell

FCI Literacy Program, El Reno

When I Close My Eyes

When I close my eyes, I love myself so much. I wonder why God has given us such a beautiful world with birds, animals, air, and water, but doesn't charge us for anything.

(Part 1.)

When I open my eyes, I see large houses with
many rooms, but no one to live in them.
Costly medicine managing poor health.
People look confused, divided in thought,
hurting from inside. Without knowing where
life is going.

But when I close my eyes, I can see how people
are connected with another life through new
technology. How rich your life is, isn't it?

I cannot control the price of costly medicine. But
I can control what I put in my mouth.

I am the driver of my vehicle, which is called
BODY, isn't it?

Costly medicine shows that now we have the
solution to every disease. This is the result of
our education, our parents' sacrifice.

(Part 2.)

When I open my eyes, I see many affairs but
no true love; luxurious life but no time for
others; facing the tornado-twister, they

get disappointment, hopelessness, and
frustration.

But when I close my eyes—because of disaster
people come together, holding each other's
hand, supporting each other.

Lack of true love but still I can see their
friendship and their caring.

It is true: rich people do not have time, but they
help people by charity, donation.

God gives us life

Which is so beautiful

So please live this life every minute

Because life is mortal.

Isn't it?

Anshu Rasaily

Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service, Tulsa

Bravery

They call me dummy but I say:

D—is for decisions in my life.

U—is an uncommon letter but always used.

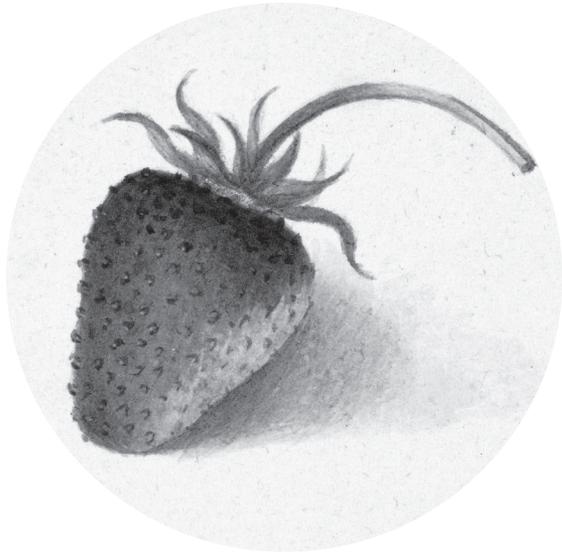
M—is for making a change in my life.

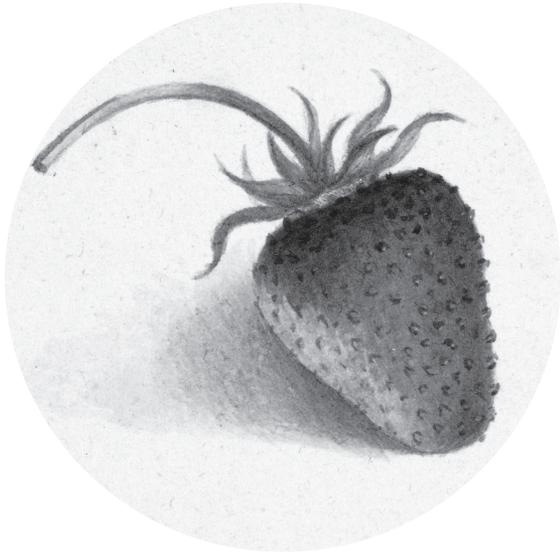
M—is for maintaining the change.

Y—that's easy. Yes, I can! Yes, I will make that
change!

But ... they call me dummy!

Doug Williams
Community Literacy Centers, Inc., OKC





Oklahoma Department of Libraries



INSTITUTE of
Museum and Library
SERVICES

O • K • L • A • H • O • M • A

LITERACY RESOURCE OFFICE

This project was made possible by the **Oklahoma Department of Libraries** and supported in whole or in part by the **Institute of Museum and Library Services**. Opinions expressed in this publication or presentation do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries or Institute of Museum and Library Services and no official endorsement by those entities should be inferred.

For information about literacy efforts in Oklahoma
please visit libraries.ok.gov/literacy or
call the **Literacy Resource Office** at **1-800-522-8116**