
Changes In Our Lives

Partners in Reading
Adult Literacy Program
San José Public Library
2001

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Introduction

This fascinating collection of personal stories reflects changes in the lives of individuals participating in San José Public Library’s adult literacy program, Partners in Reading. These adults have demonstrated the courage to initiate change or adapt to changing circumstances. They are moving forward “on the road to new beginnings,” as one learner described the cover design of the book. In the Partners in Reading program, they each work to improve their reading and writing skills through weekly sessions with their own volunteer tutor.

The theme “changes” was chosen by the Partners in Reading Learner Council because it covers a wide range of topics. The adult learners responded to the theme with a rich variety of stories focusing on changes they have experienced in learning, family, work, independence, health, or religion. Learning is the most popular topic, followed by family.

You will enjoy reading about the experiences of Irma learning English, Huong learning to drive, and several people learning how to read. Daisy, Mary, and Phyllis wrote about gaining the

skills and confidence to become more independent. Fighting in Vietnam changed Rudy's life. Getting hearing aids enabled Angel to begin reading. Some stories describe treasured memories of family members. As you read this book, you will catch glimpses of the lives of some interesting people. We thank them for sharing their stories with us.

Gail Nyhan

Learning

First Hearing, Then Reading

By Angel Lemus



My name is Angel Lemus. I am 57 years old. When I was little, I had ear infections. Teachers ignored me in class. I sat in the back; I could not hear. I put the volume up on the TV and the radio. Finally I had a hearing test when I was 53. The doctor said, "You're going to need hearing aids." I could hear the TV better. I was happy because I could hear the sounds of rain and birds singing. I could hear my jacket rustling. I was like a baby with a new toy. I was excited. I even cried. Now, I can hear words. I decided to learn to read.

Angel says that he is a sports freak. He likes football, baseball, basketball, soccer, and especially auto racing. Art is another one of his interests. Egypt, the Aztecs, and Mayas are his favorite subjects. He also likes to cook and now read. His family is proud and happy that he is learning to read. His wife Cin D is very supportive.

Discovering My Ability to Read

By Edward Reyes

My name is Edward Reyes, and I was born in Mexico. I came to California when I was seven years old. I went through high school, not knowing how to read. When I got out of high school I went looking for jobs. It was hard to find jobs, so I found jobs working out in the fields picking all kinds of fruit and vegetables and driving forklifts and tree pruning. But I knew that I had to find a job working in a factory. So I went looking for factory jobs. I found a factory job. But I could not fill out the applications. I went to work, but I had problems — I could not read. I could follow instructions.

So I had to learn to read. I heard about a reading program that they have at the library. I learned about it through watching TV. At first I was afraid to go down to learn about it because I thought they would say, “We are sorry we cannot help you because you cannot read a word at all.” When I did go down to the library, they gave me a reading test to see what I did know. I found out

that I did know some words, so they got a tutor to help from there. The tutor helped me to sound out vowels and put letters together and make words and sentences. Now I can write sentences and make paragraphs. So I thank God for all the tutors that take time to reach out and help others.

Ed was born in Mexico in a little village called Sangre. When he came to California, he sneaked under the fence, and his uncle was waiting at the other side. He was seven at the time. He went to school in Brawley, California, until he was ten years old. His brother came to Brawley from San Jose in the summer of 1950 and brought him to San Jose. The rest of his schooling was in San Jose Playa Elementary School. He ended up at James Lick High School. After high school he had several jobs including roofing, chrome plating, molding, food processing and custodial work. Ed is presently working at Los Altos High School as a custodian.

The Story of My Life

By Ernestine Cooke



I'm glad to belong to the Partners in Reading program because it helps me to learn to write and read in English. My first language was Spanish.

Changes happen all the time. When I was six years old, I remember I was in the first grade, and my teacher said, "You're skipping to second grade." Learning was easy then, but it never is too late to learn.

The game of life has funny rules. These things are never taught in schools — the ups and downs, and highs and lows, happiness, grief, joys and woes.

Ernestine first came to San Jose 40 years ago. At that time, it was a small town. San Jose has also gone through many changes and is now a big city. Ernestine is retired, but is an active volunteer, spending time at a local senior citizens' home and helping pregnant women in need. She advises, "Don't worry about stumbling blocks; see them as stepping stones instead. You will have success in life and keep moving ahead."

Learning to Read the Newspaper

By Frank Mireles, Sr.



Hi, my name is Frank Mireles, Sr., and I am 38 years old. I cannot read to my children and I cannot read the newspaper. Jim, my boss, asked me if I wanted to learn to read. I said yes, but I didn't know how to get help. So Jim started to look into a program for me. He looked around, but he didn't find anything. I found this program, and I called to sign up. I have been here for four months, and it's been good for me.

Frank is the father of three children and has been married nineteen years. Frank and his family have been living in Modesto for fifteen years. Frank works for Cupertino Electric.

Building My Confidence

By Freddy Moreno



My name is Freddy Moreno. I came to ask about the PAR program, to learn to do more reading for a better job. Now, I have more confidence, and I feel better about myself. I just bought some conga drums like the ones I used to play in high school. I want to take a music class to learn more about the music I used to play—Latin jazz.

Freddy has been a learner with PAR since October 2000. Freddy now feels more confidence with his reading. He enjoys listening to music, watching sports, and going fishing. Freddy's goals include reading more often and getting his own place to live.

The Importance of Being a Part of PAR

By Gloria Ramirez



I am Gloria Ramirez. I enrolled in this program when my friend, Ernestine C., motivated me to join it. I learned spelling, writing, and reading. I started in 1999 and after seven months with my first tutor, Mrs. Bobbi A., I improved a lot. Unfortunately, for health reasons, I had to stop the classes for eight months. Now that I feel better, I believe I must keep learning. I have returned to classes with the help of the computer in the Partners in Reading technology section that I like very much, in particular the pictures and the way I can build words and also the sounds.

My most important goal is to learn writing. I feel more free, more independent, when I write things myself without asking anybody's help. This is very important to me. My first goal was to pass the interview to become a U.S. citizen. I am still preparing for the questions and answers and hope to be successful, thanks to PAR's

support.

Gloria's first language is Spanish. Now, after raising five children, she enjoys and needs time for herself. She was a demo worker at Costco and has worked in food service for a number of years.

A Change in My Life

By Hidolina G.



In the past I didn't ask, learn, or hear from people who had knowledge in life. I did everything by myself. I was in situations that I could have avoided, but I didn't. It was like a train going slow and then fast, and I didn't know how to stop it. But now I know the good way to learn without pain. I made a big change in my life. It's listening to the voice of experience. Now if I have a situation that I don't know what to do, I will ask somebody who knows.

Life is pretty if you know how to live it. Two wonderful flowers and one shining sun brighten my life with happy smiles. They are my two daughters, Jessica and Abrina, and my husband, Abraham. I am busy all day having a lot of things to do. Walking around the world knowing everything can change, I am enjoying the best days of my life.

Hidolina came to Partners in Reading in 1997. She is very happy to be in this program because it is helping her a lot with her English. She says that everybody in PAR is friendly, like a family.

Learning How to Drive

By Huong Nguyen

When I lived in my country, I never dreamt of driving a car. The most transportation was by bicycle, motorcycle, and public bus. When I came to the United States, I found out that knowing how to drive a car is a necessity. I was determined to learn to drive a car by the age of thirty.

There are many reasons why I needed to drive. The main reason was so that I could drive myself to work. At the time I worked swing shift, and it is dangerous to take the bus at midnight. I also didn't want my husband to wake up at midnight and pick me up. I wanted to drive to the shopping mall and grocery stores. Several years later, I also needed to drive my children to the babysitter's house and to school. I wanted to own a car and depend on myself, so I wouldn't need to ask my husband to take me everywhere. I needed to drive to the beauty salon store every month to get my hair cut. After I studied the traffic law for about a month, I passed

the written test at the Alma branch of the Department of Motor Vehicles on my first try. I was excited. The first part was easy, but the second part was very difficult for me. At first, my friend offered to practice driving with me at the empty parking lot at the Japanese Garden. When I had better control of the car, my husband sat next to me and let me drive from work to home. That was easy because at midnight there were not many cars on the road.

After four or five months of driving practice, I decided to take the road test. The first time, I was extremely nervous, but I think the test lady was more nervous than I was. The tester asked me to turn left on the busy street while we were in the middle lane. I did not understand that I had to turn left right away when the tester gave me orders to do it, even if it was not safe. I tried to change lanes, but I couldn't, so I stopped in the middle of the street at the signal light. Many people were honking at us. My tester was scared and asked me to drive back to the D.M.V right away. Of course, I failed that time, but I kept trying. After four tries, I finally passed my road test. I was so happy, I almost cried when I stood in front of the

camera for my driver's license. Now I can drive myself and my children everywhere.

Huong has been with PAR for two years. She has two children—a son, who is 13, and a daughter, who is 15. In her free time she enjoys cooking, walking and reading.

Learning English

By Irma Llanas

My name is Irma Llanas. I came from Mexico where I lived in a small town. I came to California in 1978. At first, I lived with my aunt. Then I started babysitting two children. Later I worked in a restaurant cooking Mexican food. A year later, I worked in an electronics company, assembling boards. When I worked there my boss told me I had to learn English. I started in an ESL class but I did not learn what I needed. In 1988 I started working for Kaiser Permanente as a housekeeper. I saw that I needed more English. I was stuck because I did not know where to go. A co-worker told me about Partners in Reading. In that program, I met my teacher, Alice. From then on my life changed a lot. I continued in Kaiser Permanente, but now I work for the Material Services Department. I make more money than I did as a housekeeper. My English helped me get a better job.

Irma is married and has four children: Maria Luisa, 9 years old; Ricardo, 8; Gilbert Daniel, 4; and Julian, 2. They are all in school and keep her very busy. She also works 40 hours a week outside her home.

My Gratitude Speaks

By Jeanette Gonzalez



My name is Jeanette. I have been a learner with PAR since 2000 so that I can better myself and have a better life. Now I work at a professional law service and a homeless shelter, InnVision. I also work at CAPS, where I run a group called Process for Drug and Alcohol in Recovering Addicts.

I was born in San Jose and went to school here, too. I've been here all my life. I come from a big family. My mother never spoke English, so it was hard for her to teach me how to read and write. I come from a family that did not know how to read or write, so I will be the first but not the last. I will pass it down to my children. Thank you for the reading and writing program. I have self-respect and hope to give it always so that I can keep it. In the future I would like to get my GED and go to college.

Poem

By Jeanette Gonzalez

I have self respect
I have a better understanding of life,
I have the willingness to move on.

I have been given light of life
That I may better myself and not
Do it alone.

So my reading and writing have given me
A better outlook on life.

So many after me will not have to
Be alone, and feel the love I have for
Myself and others, that no one can take
From me.

Jeanette has been in the PAR program since the fall of 2000. She has a very busy schedule, working at three jobs and trying to keep up with the program. Her first priority, at this time, is to improve her reading skills so that she can take and pass the GED test. Jeanette is also the proud grandmother of twin boys. One of her incentives to improve her reading is being able to read to her grandchildren.

“Hi, My Name is Louie”

By Louie P.

I started the program, Partners in Reading, about two years ago. To my amazement I've accomplished so much. When I started the program, I didn't know that two letters made a sound. And now, two years later, I can read the mail and I can help my grandkids to do their homework. I've learned how to use a dictionary. I've read three books of the history of the United States. And my greatest accomplishment was reading the Bible. I started reading the Bible about a year and five months ago. I have read fourteen hundred pages. I still need four hundred and fifty pages.

I am doing so well that I've even got a better paying job. I am halfway through the program. I should start Book 7 within the next month. I know I still have a long way to go, but I'll get there. I would like to thank the staff of Partners in Reading for all the help they have given me. As for my tutor, Suzanne, I am very thankful for all the help she has given me. I couldn't accomplish this

without her help and patience. “You have changed my life so much. Thank you for all your help. May God bless you all. Thank you.”

Louie was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He dropped out of school at the age of twelve because he was having a hard time with English. He has worked in the construction business since he was about twenty-two. He joined Partners in Reading after getting hurt on the job. Louie is now in Book 7 of the Wilson Reading System. He enjoys reading to his grandchildren.

The Importance of Reading

By Robert Nanez



My name is Robert Nanez. As I was growing up, I wanted to learn to read, but the school did not have enough help. Because I could not read and write, it made my life miserable. Communication with other people was very hard. Because I could not speak the language, it was hard to have good friends. When I went to junior high, it got better. I started doing math. Math was nice, but I wanted to learn to write and read. It is important to me because I want to better my life. Now I am in a reading program. I am reading and writing.

Robert moved to California when he was 11. He has two sons. He works for the City of San Jose. He likes to work around his house and work with plants and trees. His biggest goal is to learn how to read and write so that he can read to his grandchildren. He also likes to work out and keep in shape.

A New Beginning

By Yvonne Q.

My name is Yvonne, and I am 35 years old. I have seven children and am currently living with my boyfriend, who is 45 years old. I am in Partners in Reading because I had quit school when I was 17 years old. I decided to quit school because of my two children, Richard and Monique. Life was too hectic, and it was too difficult for me to deal with it at the time. I stayed home to take care of my children and to have more babies. Also, I was young and naïve; I thought more about boys than I did about class.

Looking back now, I feel regret because I cannot read as well as I would like to read. I should have stayed in school and paid attention. If I did not have a dysfunctional family, I think I would have had a better life because I would have made better decisions, such as staying in school. I think I would have learned more. I am now trying to correct my mistake by putting myself in this program. My boyfriend deserves some credit for

helping me enroll in this program. Now I am learning how to read better. For me, it's just a start, and I know I have a long way to go.

Yvonne is a self-driven and enthusiastic learner. She is open, friendly, and fun to talk to. Although Spanish was her first language, Yvonne is fluent in English. Yvonne is currently a homemaker, and she spends a lot of time making sure her children are okay. She hopes to improve her reading and writing so that she can take the driving test.

Family

Me and My Grandpa



By Addie R.

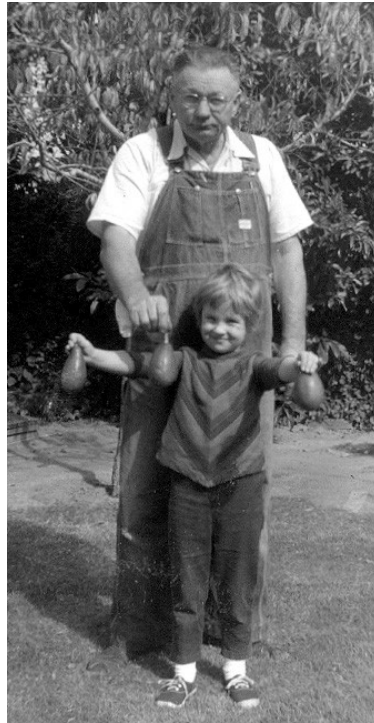
Hi, my name is Addie. I live in San Jose, CA, but I was born in Needles, CA. I am happy to say life has been fun. Parts of growing up were hard, but I made it. I went to school, and I liked most of my teachers, some of whom I still keep in touch with. When I was growing up, my days were the same. I got up in the morning and went to school. I caught the bus to and from school. When I came home I went outside and played with the other kids. I was happy and life was good. I had pets: ducks, dogs, turtles and cats. We lived by a creek and caught tadpoles and minnows, and I kept them until they hopped off or died. I'd play in the creek with the duck and the dog, and we often got very wet. I got old enough to do things by myself. I went to the mall on the bus and had a lot of fun. One day my grandpa was there when I got back from the mall. He asked me if I wanted to go fishing the next day.

We got an early start for the next day. The drive took

three hours to get to where we would be camping for the night. After we set up camp, grandpa showed me how to put bait on the hook and how to cast out on the water. It was a great time. We talked about when he was young, while we waited to catch something. He told me stories about when he lived in Oklahoma, working on the farm with the livestock, working for Barnum and Bailey's circus and traveling on the railroads. As I sat on the shore listening and watching the water and thinking, "This is the best time of my life," the pole jerked. I think I jerked too. I had caught my first fish! Grandpa said it was a rainbow trout, but to me it just looked very pretty. It was a great day.

I think having my grandpa changed my life because I had him to go to for advice, for friendship, and also when I just wanted to have some fun. Some of my friends did not have someone to go to, so I knew I was lucky to have him. He showed me how to garden, and I still love doing that. As a child I had good friends, and I had my grandpa, and I think I am a better person for having him when I was young.

Addie has two cats: a gray one called Shaggy and an orange striped one called Squeaker. She likes all kinds of music, going to movies and cooking. She belongs to a leather guild, where she is learning to tool leather. She loves meeting new people. Her favorite hobby is gardening.



Addie and her grandpa

Changes in My Life

By Ben Schaffino

When I was about eight years old, we moved to another state. My dad was able to buy a restaurant and land in New Mexico, in a town called Deming.

The restaurant was called The Manhattan Café. We served American food (hamburgers and fries, sandwiches, sodas). I would stand by my mother's side and give the customers their change. I remember saying, "Please come again," to the tourists that would eat in the restaurant. We made a life there for two-and-a-half years.

About this time my sister and I and my mother came back to California without my dad. My sister and I felt lost in a big world. I didn't see my dad for four years after that.

My mother had a hard life after that, moving around a lot, but still did well. She was a nurse at Valley Medical

Center in San Jose. My mom is a strong woman. She played the part of both parents, which is hard to do when you are not a man. We grew up fast and went to work at an early age. For financial reasons, we were not able to attend school as far as past high school.

Concentrating on other issues in life, overlooking more important issues like reading and spelling, I lost the tools that are needed to succeed in this lifetime. So I am happy to say that I found help in PAR at 30 years of age. Hopefully I can succeed better in my work and personal life with this program, which I feel I can.

Ben was born in San Jose on November 11th, 1969, to Cruz and Marge Schaffino. Ben was raised in California and New Mexico with his sister, Naomi, who is 33 years old. He likes sports and hunting. His favorite sport was and is football. His dad took him hunting for rabbit, coyote, and ducks and pheasants. Ben enjoys movies as a time of relaxation. He used to have a large salt-water exotic fish tank, which was very relaxing.

My Mom Changed My Life

By Donna Parks



My name is Donna Parks. I have been in the reading program for several years. Before my mom died, she wanted her daughter to go clean; but I couldn't do it at that time. But the day after we buried her, I decided to change my life and make my mom proud of me.

I don't know if you believe in spirits, but I do. I was sitting on my sofa. I was feeling so alone. Then I saw a bright shadow, and I said, "Mama? Is that you?"

She said, "Yes, it's me. I'm looking out for you, baby," and I felt a miracle come into my life.

I really feel my life is on the road to full recovery, and I plan to learn to read and change my whole life. It will open a new world for me and my family. I feel my mom's spirit is in my home. My family says that I look just like my mom, and I'm very proud to look like her. My mom took a lot of people into her home who had no place to go. I've done the same thing in my home. I really miss

my mama very much.

My parents' anniversary is February 14th. Everyone knows that February 14th is Valentine's Day. Our parents were long-time sweethearts, as far back as anyone can remember.

Well, I guess I've said enough about my parents, so I'm closing off for now.



Donna's mom and dad

Sincerely,

Donna Parks

Donna is interested in bettering her reading skills. She would like to work in a library, but her reading skills are not good enough yet. She feels that they are getting better every day.

Change

By Florine A. Radatz

Was there ever a time in my life that there wasn't a change? And what brought about all this change? When did it start and how did it start? Being born was the first change, just waking up in this world started the winds of change! From birth to six years old, life was sweet as honey. Furthermore, whatever change came about, my parents took care of them. Now, at age six, it was time to enter school. This was very happy for me because my brother was in school, and I wanted to be there too. However, I did not know at the time I had a reading problem, and it did not show up until I was in the second grade!

This was the beginning of a very difficult time to come! I couldn't understand what was wrong. I knew I was a bright child in some ways; moreover, I never had a problem adding numbers. The struggle went on throughout seventh grade. I was left back in second grade, but I made sure this would not happen to me

again. I tried very hard to read well. My reading was slow, and the other children would laugh at me, but I was a strong-willed child. I thought to myself, "These kids are fools! They can't add numbers the way I can. I can just do it in my head and put it on paper." It was a breeze. And after having my daughter and becoming a nanny, reading became easier, because the TV shows for kids were a great help.

CHANGE! I'm one of these people that don't like change, unless I'm in control of change. I don't like change forced on me! I'm kicking and screaming not to change one thing. Furthermore, I don't want change knocking at my door. I don't like my work being torn apart and turned upside down. However, over the years, many changes have come into my life and altered my course! The most painful and difficult change was when my husband of fourteen months died. We moved here to CALIFORNIA IN JANUARY 1990 AND OCTOBER 1990 BILL DIED! The trauma of pain and grief shook the very foundation I stood on! I felt like a Wounded Bird with a broken wing, no longer able to fly until my wing healed.

Being heavy with thought, I sought solitude to solely

avoid the torture of pain and change. My deeply shattered world had my mind turning in opposite directions and trying to reach beyond clouds for an answer to this transformation. Moreover, I was alone in CALIFORNIA without family or friends. Therefore, struggling with my loss was like FIRE IN THE BELLY OF A DRAGON! Also, I knew I had to plot my way through this arrangement of change if I was going to live in CALIFORNIA alone!

The cycles of change have taken me on many journeys over the past years. The visit of change is an HONORABLE CODE OF LIFE! Therefore, I do not ignore change the way I used to. I try to find a balance in the situation of change while it is gripping at MY SOUL and testing MY VERY BEING! Indeed, Change has given me nourishment and gentle thought and action of will to take root and grow. Moreover, Change can become taxing, but it also becomes periods of Growth and Learning. Indeed, it's the misery of crisis and triumphs. But after all is said and done, change leaves us with motives, ideals and opportunities necessary to improve our life! The Colors of Change are Light and Dark, Beauty and Ugly, it can limit the boundaries. But it

gives discipline, and change is about testing life and choices. Putting everything into perspective: Change requires me to leave something behind to embrace the life of others!

Florine has been in the program since March 1996. She feels that she has achieved greatness in becoming a writer. She works regularly with the computer and feels comfortable using technology. Using the Internet and word processing are two of her greatest achievements.



Florine in Napa Valley, California

My Mom, the Rock

By Gloria S.

My mom was 27 when I was born. I was the fifth child in our family. My family worked in the fields in the San Joaquin Valley, picking cotton, grapes, prunes, walnuts, and vegetables.

Mom always struggled everywhere we moved. She made an old shack into a beautiful home. She always kept us from being hungry. I liked the way she used to tell me how I was born prematurely and how she used to have special food for me. She used to get me sherbet, even though it was expensive, because I was sickly.

When the other kids in the family got sick, I had to go to the hospital. There was a nurse who told Mom she wanted to adopt me because I was so frail, and she wanted to take care of me. Mom told her, "No, that's my little girl." Mom was afraid to go to sleep because she thought that nurse would take me.

Mom taught me how to be clean and stay neat. She helped me learn how to pay bills. She used to get mad

at my brother and sister when they used to help me do things because they thought I needed help. She wanted me to learn to do things by myself. She wanted me to be independent. I felt that I was going to be independent. Mom made me go to school to learn as much as I could.

Now my sisters and brother can't believe the things I do on my own. I even make doctor's appointments. I looked into learning how to read. I went to the local library to ask to see if they had a reading program. They sent me to PAR. I went to job fairs to look into jobs. I keep my house clean. I cook on my own. I'm surprised when I make something to eat and it comes out good.

Why was my mom called The Rock? Because she was so strong and taught me everything. I'm grateful that Mom taught me so much. My advice to others would be: look for someone who can help you learn things on your own, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Gloria has six sisters and one brother. She used to work in day care. She enjoys listening to music, shopping, doing puzzles, and spending time with her family. She works hard to learn how to read and write.

Tribute to My Younger Sister

By Jackie S.



This is a tribute to my younger sister, who died at the age of 25.

Her name is Octavia Dumas. She is the eighth child in our immediate family. She grew up in the early seventies. We had family skits for fun and entertainment. It was lots of fun. The younger children had more fun than the older children did. They were really into it. It was a lot of fun through younger eyes. They would imitate comediennes from TV. Our family members would enjoy mimicking cartoons, with lots of laughter.

Octavia achieved her goals. She always accomplished what she set her mind to. She succeeded in track.

Before that she was in team sports. She also took part in the shot put, discus, pole vaulting, and the 100-yard dash. During that time she excelled in sports.

Oh! I remember one of the times our mom wanted her to

model an African costume. That was one of the bonding moments of motherhood. One of the finest memories of her was her new baby.

Octavia was one of the three sisters who were having babies in the same year, but not at the same time. One of the changes in our family was that they all became mothers. Now all the sisters have children. We spoke about the similarities in our children and our home life. We asked for advice from each other. We learned positives and negatives about our lives. Another thing that I recall is that Octavia appreciated each one of us. We were supportive of each other, always remaining a big, happy family. We grew as the time passed by. Octavia's daughter's name is Ebonie. She favors her mother and she is lovely. She is about seven-and-a-half years old.

My mother had eight children. She had ten grandchildren. Her mother lived in Texas. She would visit us and share her humor and stories. Our other grandmother who lives in Oakland would come to visit. She also shared her life experiences. We would also go to her house. Both grandmothers were present when

Octavia was born. Octavia would play with grandmother's dolls. The doll's name is Miss Beesly. She would talk when her string was pulled. I remember that she would laugh with the doll. Another grandmother who lives down the street would come and visit. All three grandmothers were friends. When two of them visited at the same time, it was one of the happiest moments.

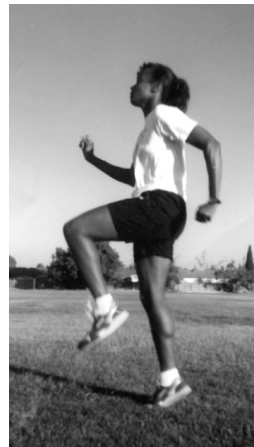
We had fun when both grandmothers played outside with us. They turned the jump rope and would take turns jumping with us. My sisters and I would be happy to play outside together. We played on the monkey swing. A monkey swing is a car tire with a rope tied to a tree. Another game we would play is kick ball. My grandmother suggested that we should sing songs. We learned some new songs when we did chores. It was fun to whistle while we work. That was one of grandmother's sayings. One of the nicest thoughts that will stay with me is grandmother's singing. Another thing I will never forget is grandmother's praying. Our Texas grandmother had a special way of greeting us when we came from school. She would say, "Good afternoon, sweet sugar." When we would all go outside to play, the both of them would join us. To be a part of our family

requires a strong belief in each other and in God. We have what it takes.

Jackie has been participating in the PAR program since 1994. She enjoys expressing herself in writing. Her goal is to write short stories. PAR is an excellent place to enrich her English skills. Jackie is a part of the PAR Learner Council. She enjoys attending adult literacy conferences, and her two older children attended a conference with her. She is currently working as a legal process clerk for the County of Santa Clara Superior Court, and she would like to complete the civil service test and get a permanent position with benefits. Jackie's tutor is Ian Kushner.



Octavia in grade school



Octavia at track practice

Life is Change



By Kathleen Smith

Seven years ago my mom passed away from cancer (smoking). It was hard on my family and me. Big changes in life are death, marriage, graduation, and giving birth, and the trick is going on with your life. Like Tom Hanks said in *Forrest Gump*, "Life is like a box of chocolates." You do not know what you are going to get.

Kathleen was born in Los Angeles. She moved to San Jose at the age of three or four. After the 1989 earthquake, Kathleen and her mother moved to Texas. She stayed in Texas for one year, then returned to San Jose and got married. Presently she has two cats. Her hobbies are bowling and working on crafts.

Having a Baby



By Louise Goree

I was 19 years old when I had Mary Louise, my first baby. Having a baby changed me. I became more responsible because she was with me all the time. We all slept in the same room, and she went to work with my husband and me.

Louise joined PAR about nine years ago. She enjoys volunteering in the PAR office and working on the computer. She has five children. The youngest, George, lives in San Jose.

My Big Trip Back East

By Nancy Rowe



Many years ago, I made a trip to Michigan to see my in-laws. I went in October. I am a Mexican-American born in California. I was never back East before. I didn't think there were any Mexican-Americans in Michigan. I was really worried that the people in Michigan would be prejudiced. I was also worried that my in-laws wouldn't like me.

We drove all day and night and arrived in Michigan in three days. I wanted to stay in a motel, but there was a convention, so we kept driving. Driving so long was interesting because I saw lots of countryside. I saw red-brown rocks and mountains in Utah. I saw miles of wheat and cornfields. I didn't see many people, and I saw lots of space.

When we arrived, I stayed at my husband's folks' place. I was relieved that they weren't prejudiced. My sister-in-law told me that she was also worried about meeting me.

She never saw a Mexican before. I thought this was funny.

Things in Michigan were different in some ways. There were no fences between houses. The trees all changed color. People in shopping malls did stare at me sometimes. I guess they never saw Mexican-looking people before. I also saw some Amish people. I was surprised that people like that really did exist.

It was an exciting trip. I learned a lot about people and about America.

Nancy has a grown daughter, Vanessa. Nancy works with seniors who need lots of special care. A San Jose native, she has seen many changes in her hometown. Nancy has traveled to Hawaii, Mexico, Texas, extensively through California, and to Michigan.

On My Brother's Ranch in Colorado

By Patty Colombo

Every year in August we go to Colorado for my birthday and Jim's. We fish in his pond, play pool, basketball, and play with the horses and feed them. He also has two dogs. One is

named Bela, who is nice and quiet. The other is real playful.

His name is

Keemosabbe. This is a picture of the ranch.

We also have a motorcycle to ride, a tractor and a lawn

motor to ride. We had snow this year. It was so much fun. Jim came to spend Christmas with us. It was a nice



Patty goes to Creativity Unlimited for art lessons, and she also teaches art classes four times a week. Patty enjoys reading very much, also art, fishing, bowling and especially music. She is also interested in fashion.

What is Change?



By Pauline Garcia

“To put or take a thing in place of something else, to
cause to be different”

from Webster’s New World College Dictionary

My life changed when I met Robert, my husband of twenty years. Change number one. Now a big change for me again in my life, change number two, my husband is deceased. Big, big change for me. But there are a lot of people that go through changes, like me. When you’re changing from an infant to a child, that is a big beginning of change. Just think of it. Or if there were no change, where would we be? Ooo-weee, now that is scary!

Pauline came to Partners in Reading in 1995. She had to leave to take care of her husband, who was very ill. Two years later, she is back. Now she has time to get involved again with her friends at PAR.

The Biggest Change in My Life

By Shirley Williams



My life changed seven years ago. I was in school and really enjoying getting an education. My twenty-one-year-old daughter, Cherrie, lived with me at the time. One day I received a phone call from my younger sister, Glenda. She told me her two sons, Titus and Charzel, had been taken away from her and put in foster care. She was crying.

Glenda asked me if I would take both children. I said, "No." Then Cherrie and I talked about it. She wanted me to take the boys. So I changed my mind and decided to give it a try. The father of the older brother, Charzel, went to the foster care home to get the boys and brought them both to me. They stayed with me for one week. Then Charzel's father came and got him. I wanted the brothers to stay together, but they had different daddies. I was left with Titus.

Titus was a drug baby. He hollered a lot and was sick all the time. There was no one else to take care of him. I knew that if I didn't take him, he would have to go back

into foster care. I got attached to him, and I didn't want him to go back. I decided to put my life on hold and take care of him.

My life changed because I had to drop out of school. All my plans were put on hold, but I felt I was doing the right thing, and I wouldn't change anything. I wanted to give this baby a chance to grow up, be healthy and go to school.

Now, seven years later, Titus is in second grade. He loves school. He loves to read, write poetry and draw. He never likes to miss a day of school. Sometimes we get on each other's nerves, and sometimes it's challenging to raise a boy. Still, Titus has been a good change in my life. He's made me a more responsible person and a better person. He's brought love into my life, and we love each other. Now that I'm older and Titus is in school, I'm working on my education again.

Shirley has been a learner with PAR for one year. Her goals are to improve herself so that she can return to work and get a driver's license. She is from Alabama and has been in California for twenty-three years. She enjoys listening to music and going to concerts in the park. Her current tutor is Jacie Levitt.

Health

How My Life Changed

By Sharmane Augusta



My name is Sharmane Augusta. I was born in Berkeley, CA, in 1957. I'm an epileptic. Epileptic is a Greek word. I also have dyslexia. I had seizures from five years old to the age of 21. I've had different kinds of seizures. I had staring seizures; I also had petit mal and grand mal seizures. Petit mal is a short seizure. A grand mal seizure is a long seizure. After I had my CAT scan, they found out I had a cyst and a tumor. But my mom said I had a high fever when I was a baby, and Dr. Conner thought that could have caused me to have epilepsy.

I had brain surgery when I was 21. After the surgery, my handwriting was better. I could read better. I started to do crossword puzzles, which I thought I could never do. My hand wasn't shaking anymore. Yet I was scared to walk out of the house. In my mind I thought I was going to have a grand mal seizure. When I found out I wasn't going to have seizures anymore, I was still scared. I didn't want to go to school. It was scary to me for a long

time. As I became accustomed to not having seizures, I got my self-confidence back. I started going to plays in San Francisco with my girlfriend. I began to wear pretty scarves because I'm baldheaded. That used to bother me. My doctor didn't want me to wear a wig because if I scratched my scalp, I could get an infection.

Now I want to learn more. I'm going back to school for sign language. I could go all over the place. I don't have to watch my head anymore. I can't ride a bike or roller skate. But I learned to live with it. And that's what I tell my children at Head Start in San Jose where I work. I have admitted to myself that I cannot finish certain math or English classes at this time. But I am not giving up. My advice I would give to others is to learn to overcome your disability.

Sharmane lives with her parents on the east side of San Jose by James Lick High School. She has been involved with her community and has voiced her concern for the youth in her community. Sharmane has been coming to PAR for five years and is currently on the Learner Council. She has also attended several events through PAR that were held in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Jose. Sharmane has been an inspiration because of her positive attitude and consideration towards others. In spite of her disabilities, Sharmane continues to press on.

Farewell Yesterday



By Silvia Zuniga

My name is Silvia Zuniga, and I would like to share my experience of my breast cancer surgery. This experience started in January of 1998. I was studying accounting at CET, and one day my teacher Yolanda and I were speaking about a mammogram. She asked me if I get a mammogram frequently, and I said, “No.” I told her I had not seen the doctor in 18 years. My last checkup was when my youngest son was born. Then I told her that I had a little lump in my right breast, but it didn’t hurt me. So she checked my breast, and she was scared about it. Immediately she made an appointment for me.

In April I had the surgery on my breast, and the doctor only took out the lumps — one in the breast and one in the underarm. I want to say thank you to the doctor because he performed a beautiful surgery. After surgery, I completed 12 sessions of chemotherapy. I also want to thank a wonderful lady, Michele Spinney, because she

helped me and gave me a lot of support during that period. I used to call her my angel. She is a very nice person and friend. "I LOVE YOU, MICHELE."

Of course, thanks to my wonderful family — my husband Carlos, and my sons Ramoncito, Alex and Toñito.

During that time I learned to communicate better and be happy all the time. Now I am still alive and enjoying my life with my family.

THANKS, EVERYONE, FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT
AND HELP.

BE HAPPY! SMILE ALL THE TIME.

Silvia is the mother of two sons and is also a grandmother. She is taking care of her granddaughter during the day. She likes to go out on the weekend along with her husband. She wants to say thanks to Jennifer for helping her and for everything the program has given to her.

Work

Job

By Diane G.

This is about my job. The job I do is very rewarding. I meet interesting people. I have never thought of doing anything else. I have been doing my job for about twenty-three years. By the way, I work in construction. I clean model homes.

Diane G. joined PAR to become more independent and improve her life. She was born in England but was raised in the United States. She enjoys jogging and riding bikes and is looking forward to reading books.

Getting My Dream Job

By Michael Fortier



When I was seven years old I went to a foster home, at 12 to a farm school where I joined the FFA (Future Farmers of America). I finished in 1969 at 18 and went home to San Jose, but the FFA didn't want me. They said, "We don't want you because you're handicapped." So I started work at Hope Workshop, where I stayed for 10 years. Hope was my stepping`stone to getting an outside job. From the start I didn't like it at Hope. They promised me an outside job after eight years, but I had to wait another two years before they placed me out. In 1979, I worked over the summer at Hewlett-Packard. When the summer ended and the college students went back to college, HP kept me. I stayed with HP over 16 years.

Pay was better at HP. Work was challenging. I had a super boss: Glenn. I could talk to him and feel comfortable he would understand me. In every way, he was a really nice guy. I didn't know what to expect going

to a big company like that, but once I was there I settled right in.

The first three years I was doing custodial work. Then I worked in the coffee room for nine years: delivering coffee, fruit and donuts to all stations, delivering boxes and mail to different posts on the site, cleaning storm drains, picking up piles of leaves, cleaning the floods when the roof leaked, checking and scheduling conference rooms, signing for water and delivering to the whole site.

What I enjoyed most about HP was the community. HP was like a family to me. We had picnics at Blackberry Farm and Little Basin, with free T-shirts and caps. One year, the theme was "Day in the Woods"; another year we celebrated 50 years HP/20 years in Santa Clara. I had the chance to work with wonderful people: Glenn, my first boss, and Debbie, who was my boss later for eleven years.

I am still working on the same site, now for Sodexo Marriott. Glenn is retired now. He still comes to see me

at work whenever he's in town. Last year he was grateful I came to the memorial service for his wife. He cried and hugged me. "I have four sons, and you're like a son to me", he said.

Michael Fortier has been with PAR since 1997. He enjoys country music, especially Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash, whose autobiography he is currently reading.

A Gift

By Paula C.

Change is one of the few things in life that is inevitable. As we go through the evolution of what we will become, change will reveal itself in many ways. I spend a great part of my days with kids who are very special. These kids see the world differently than most kids.

I have been working in special education for ten years now, and not a day goes by that I have not been touched in some way by these kids. I remember my first week working with autistic kids. It was a cool day in April, and I was working the overnight shift at a group home for autistic girls. That night one of the girls, Liz, was having a hard time sleeping, which was not unusual for her. But this night, she came and watched TV with me, which was very unusual. You see, in Liz's fifteen years on this planet, she never allowed anyone in the same room with her when she was watching TV. I sat frozen in the moment as we watched "20/20" and then the news. Then Liz got up, looked at me and smiled, and went off

to bed. I felt very special that night that Liz allowed me to be the first one to share that space and time with her.

I have been fortunate to share many such moments with these kids that have helped me to reveal and understand myself. So, as autistic kids see the world differently, I have been forced to see the world differently also.

Paula has been working with Partners in Reading for almost three years.

Why It's Important to Have a Good Attitude



By Yolanda W.

The wind is blowing outside, and it is raining. I see the trees moving back and forth. I am sitting in the lobby where I work. I am a security officer. I work for Atlas Security. I have worked for Atlas since 1993. I enjoy my job. Some people would say, "I would never be a security officer. It is a boring job." Some people are very negative. I turn my negatives to positives. Life is what you make it. Our attitude is very important.

When I went to school, I had a good teacher. He said, "Always think for yourself and have a good attitude." My brother Pete told me when my brother Joe was young, he had to hit my brother Joe to make him work. Joe did not like to work, but he learned to work. When he grew up, he was a good worker. This is why it is important to do your best at whatever you do.

When I got a job with Atlas Security, I could not write any words, so whenever I did something, I had to do my best.

Now I am writing, and I am always learning something new on the job. If I had a bad attitude, I could not learn anything, so I have to have a positive attitude and do my best. When I am working, I always have to say good morning or good evening as employees come in and out of the lobby. I had an employee complain to me one morning about signing in. He said, "The other guards do not tell me to sign in the log book." He was so mad and loud, and I went to where he was and just talked to him in a soft voice. The next morning he came in, and he was so nice to me; after that, he was always nice.

People like us, who, for one reason or another, have not had the chance to get an education, are still smart in other ways. So let's be smart and have a good attitude; it will take you a long way at any job. At Atlas Security you see many things happen. I have seen employees at different sites get terminated because of their attitude. On the other hand, if your attitude is good, your co-workers will enjoy working with you. A positive attitude makes you a good team worker. People will help you if you are nice and ask for their help. When I needed help on the computer, I would ask an employee for help. I

learned by looking at others. I would look and see how they worded their e-mails, and I would learn, like FYI (for your information). I am still learning. I know we all can learn from each other. Thanks, Partners in Reading, for helping us have the opportunity to learn!

Yolanda feels that PAR has helped a great deal. She enjoys working on the computer and especially with WebTV. She says that she loves to learn, and she never stops learning. Yolanda has five children, who all live in Georgia. In her free time she enjoys going out with her friends.

Changing Jobs

By Yvonne Wheeler

My name is Yvonne Wheeler. I was born in Santa Clara. I moved around a lot when I was young, but I have been living in Cupertino for fifteen years. I am a preschool teacher, and I have a son. He is eight years old.

Four years ago, I was working at a retail store. I worked at the customer service desk, and I was a cashier. I also worked on the floor, stocking shelves. I liked working with the other employees and the customers. Sadly, I had an accident at work and injured my neck and my shoulder. I couldn't work at the store anymore; I was in too much pain. I tried to work as an operator and doing filing, but it didn't work out.

The company said that they would pay for my training in a school. I decided to become a preschool teacher. I was in school for seven months, and it was very hard; but I made it! I got the training and units I needed to get my certificate. Now I teach four-year-olds at preschool.

Going back to school was difficult, and my pain made me very moody and hard to get along with. My husband was very patient and understanding, but it got to the point that he couldn't take it anymore. So one day I asked him what was wrong, and he told me that he had had it with me. We talked about not complaining so much anymore. I am trying my best not to talk about my pain, and I am trying to handle it on my own. I try not to do the things that will cause me to have pain, like picking up little children or pushing myself too much. Now I can do things again with my husband and son. We like to hike and camp.

Yvonne Wheeler became a learner with PAR several years ago. After her son was born, she took a break. She returned to the program about a year ago. She is working hard to improve her reading and writing skills. Yvonne works with preschoolers at a day care center. Her tutor is Margo P.

Independence

I'm a Big Girl Now!

By Daisy Ung

I came from China in 1951. I did not speak or write English. I went to school to learn English because in this country, if I don't speak English, I cannot go to the store or work. If I have no job, how can I survive?

I went to English school. At school, I had a hard time understanding teachers. Later, I got a part-time babysitting job. I took care of a little girl about three years old. I did not have that job too long. I got married; I moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My husband's family had a restaurant. I worked there. I learned a little bit of English from customers.

After my husband died, I had to do things for myself. At the beginning I had a really difficult time. I felt lost because I did not do things by myself before. My husband took care of me just like parents take care of children. It was so hard to start taking care of myself, when I was 59 years old, and my whole life someone

took care of me. I thought I couldn't take care of myself, but I learned that I'm pretty good at it! Now, I can go places by myself: Fremont, San Francisco, church, senior centers, shopping centers, doctors and dentists. Not by car — I go by transit. I am very busy: I do line dancing and play Ping-Pong. I am happy about that. In my group I am the one who knows how to take BART to Oakland or San Francisco. When they want to go there, they call me. I feel blessed that I can do all these things. I thank God for being so good to me.

Daisy has three children and nine grandchildren now, and another one coming soon.



Daisy at a PAR computer

Moving Out on My Own

By Mary Anaya



My name is Mary G. Anaya. I have five children, 12 grandkids, and four great-grandkids. Some of them live close by in San Jose; others live as far as Phoenix, Arizona. We are a close family. We are always there for each other.

When my grandson, Jacob, was born about four-and-a-half years ago, I moved in with my daughter to help her with her second newborn. It was very demanding at first to adjust to live around the baby. But the joy of spending time with Jacob and watching him grow is well worth it. By the time Jacob grew old enough for day care, my daughter's busy schedule went back to normal. I decided it was time to move on.

Not seeing Jacob every day would be difficult at first, I thought. But I had no doubt his mother would take good care of him. I am ready to go back to an independent life that I have always enjoyed. This was how I grew up as a

kid—independent, self-sufficient, and helping out with the family income at the same time. And quite frankly, I am ready to step away from changing diapers and preparing baby formula in the middle of the night. I longed for some personal space and time.

So here I am, back on my own for about a year. I still see Jacob on a weekly basis and even take care of him on weekends from time to time. But I also enjoy the freedom that allows me to pursue my own goals and interests, like studying more with a tutor. I am glad that my decision has worked out, and that you are able to read about it in this little story as a result!

Mary grew up in a remote town in southern Arizona. She is a member of the Apache tribe. She is the second of nine children in her family. Her two daughters live nearby in San Jose. Mary first joined PAR in 1995 and has worked with a tutor on a steady basis since 1997. She has also served on the PAR Learner Council and enjoyed attending conferences to meet new people. Her study goal has been to improve her writing skills. In her spare time, Mary enjoys cooking and, on occasion, putting things together for the challenge of it.

Moving to a New Home

By Phyllis P.



My name is Phyllis. I have lived in San Jose for more than 10 years now. I am originally from Louisiana. While I was living in Louisiana, I lived with my parents. In 1992, when I moved to San Jose, I lived with my sister for more than four years. I had to find different living conditions. It was very difficult for me to find housing in my financial situation. Friends took me in, and I lived with them for more than three months. I wanted a place of my own but was not able to afford it.

My friends told me about Project Match. I went for an appointment and to be interviewed for shared housing. I was asked questions about my personal background, the area that I wanted to live in and my financial situation. I was given three names to call, but the rooms were already rented. So I called them back and got three more names. The first one I called had not rented the room. We made an appointment to meet, and at that time I met her and her parents and saw the room she

had for rent. The room she had for rent had its own private bathroom and entryway. I waited while she interviewed another person. But in the end she let me have the room. She was a nice lady to share housing with, and I lived there for over a year.

I was accepted for housing certification at Silicon Valley Independent Living Center to help me move to a one bedroom apartment. The lady at the housing program helped me to receive the certification. It was a lot of paper work and red tape. She helped me along the way for the two months it took to complete the process. I really appreciated her help. I couldn't have done it without her help. Thank you.

Phyllis has been a learner with PAR since 1993. She has had several tutors during this time and has learned something new from each one. Phyllis attends San Jose City College and is currently working on her Early Childhood Education Certificate. Phyllis has a wonderful new tutor who helps her a lot and takes a lot of time with her. Her name is Pat. Phyllis thanks her a lot.

Religion

Attitude Adjustment



By Daniel L.

The New Year's resolution I made is to be a blessing to God and His people, so He may be glorified in all things I do and say from now and through eternity. I hope that I will do my God's will, so He may be glorified in all I say and do. But I know I can't do this by myself, only through Christ Jesus and reading His word, doing His will, like following good advice and using good judgment.

Daniel has lived in the Bay Area for 22 years. He goes to Sunnyvale Church of the Nazarene. Daniel worked at Panasonic as a maintenance clerk.

A Day with the Lord

By Rudy M.

My name is Rudy. I was born in Arizona in 1949, and in 1959, at the age of 10, we moved to California. It has been 51 years. I have a lot to say and a lot to be thankful for. One of the changes came when I was overseas in Nam. It was a chain reaction of events to come. I was out in the field. I operated heavy equipment. One day, as I was leaving our perimeter, a voice came into my mind saying, "Rudy, turn to the right," so I turned right, and a friend went to the left. Then I heard and felt a large sound. As I looked around, I saw a friend fly into small pieces. I felt angry. I became brutal, ugly, and hateful for many years because of this and other events. Then I remembered that could have been me.

At that time I didn't know or understand the love of God. I was biblical illiterate. I felt bad. I was smoking grass at the time. Well, my time in Nam was over. It felt strange being back home. As time went by, I started doing more

drugs. I looked for help in different places. Then I went to different churches. Some churches would use only one verse for five minutes, and the rest of the hour they would talk and talk. Then I found myself wanting more, and I found a fly-away church. If you read Ezekiel 13 in the King James Bible, you'll find out what the Bible has to say about that.

By some strange coincidence, I heard a man teach the Bible on TV, the old-fashioned way, from cover to cover, and what the word of God has to do with me in each book of the Bible. I learned from the others, but it was watered down and half-truths. But this one man let the Word speak for itself in better, deeper understanding with boldness. I always prayed to my heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ even when I was drunk and doped up. But this man taught truth, not his word, but the Word of God, and it was the Word in boldness and truth that helped me stop drugs and other things. I learned more in one month than I did with all the others. I felt bad for truth's sake and that changed me, not the teacher, but the Word with a good teacher. I could write in questions and use tools to take English words back to

Hebrew or Greek to find a deeper truth with understanding.

I got rid of thoughts that were bad. I stopped drugs, and, for the first time, I had peace of mind. The Word took away my calloused heart and broke down that hateful man. I felt the love of God. The Word has counseled me in wisdom, knowledge and understanding. I came out of darkness of what men teach. I have peace of mind. I have nothing to hide. I study to show myself approved in His will. I grow in faith because I enjoy reading the Word every day. I do sin, but I repent and get back into the Word. I know I will have troubles and testings in this life — it helps my faith. So, I say to you, “Beware what men say.” Check it out for yourself. It is written, “That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

-- In His service, Rudy

M.

Rudy feels PAR has helped him to read and to write sentences better. He has improved his reading enough to read and study the Bible. Rudy enjoys woodcarving and working on the computer.



Rudy in Vietnam—Forget me not.

Other Changes

My Passion



By LaTanya Reed

I love to paint. I could do it all day and night. Painting gives me an outlet to express my feelings. I started making art in high school, but began seriously studying it at San Jose City College. My art teacher, Eve Mathias, inspired me to be an artist. The more I paint, the more I feel good about myself.

The subjects of my paintings are women who are in my life who have helped me along the way. I make abstract patterns out of them. I outline the subject in black and then fill it in with saturated colors. I paint in my kitchen near an open window. When I work, I listen to gospel music. It inspires me because the music talks about God. It helps me through my trial.

My mentors are my mother, my teachers at City College, and my pastor's wife. My dream is to open a gallery for disabled artists.

LaTanya was born and grew up in San Jose. She began painting while she was in high school. She is now studying art at San Jose City College, where she recently had a show of her paintings. Some of her other interests are music, choir, and walking on the beach.



LaTanya with her painting of her grandmother

My Dream



By Richard Martinez

It was one summer night. I was watching TV and fell asleep on the couch. As I was sleeping, I dreamed that I was standing next to an old man who had a long beard and was wearing a long cape. The old man suddenly started to walk with his arms extended toward the ocean. As I followed the old man, I started to float up toward the mountains. I could see the green moss, which lay upon the big mountain peaks, but I continued to rise toward the sky. As I looked down, I could see the big, beautiful, blue ocean. As I was floating, I started to float down onto an island. When I woke up the next day, the warm sun came shining through my window and upon my face. I felt as though I was still dreaming because I felt at peace with God.

Richard is enjoying Partners in Reading. If it weren't for Partners in Reading, he would not be writing this story.

Rose



By Robert Byers

A Rose is a thorn
Is in my soul
For love is deep

As an ocean sea
High as an eagle
As a big white bird

She didn't say a word
For love is here to stay
What's in our heart

Will never phase away
For a thorn is in our soul
For love is to grow
Like a rose

Robert, also known as the "Great Entertainer," has been with PAR for 10 years. In that time he has noticed improvements at work with his reading and writing skills. He is married to Renay and has a brother in San Diego. Robert loves music and plays the guitar. He is looking forward to combining his poetry with his music, and the outcome is guaranteed to be beautiful.

Spring is Change



By Pauline Garcia

Is your heart sympathetic to the birth of Spring? I love Spring. If you look really hard, you can see the colors like in a rainbow. It's all around us, and that is a change of life. The sweet smell of flowers in the air, the first day of Spring—what a change that is. Next time you get the chance, stop and smell the daisies, lilies, the beautiful roses and the honeysuckle, even the morning glories. And fields and fields of green grasses that are covered with the beautiful California poppies. It's a beautiful change of the year—a picture of a painting from our Creator. It's Spring!

Pauline came to Partners in Reading in 1995. She had to leave to take care of her husband, who was very ill. Two years later, she is back. Now she has time to get involved again with her friends at PAR.

