

My Hero

by Vicky Nguyen



Vicky is a Vietnamese lady and she says she is very old. She is still a student.

My friend Tony Nguyen is my hero. He came to the United States as a refugee with his family in 1980. After the Communists took over Vietnam, he could not live under them because he was a soldier in South Vietnam. He brought his family out of Vietnam and came to the U.S. He had a wife, Cathy, and three kids: 7-year-old Caroline, 5-year-old Michael, and 3-year-old Cindy.

After two months on welfare, he got an assembly job at an electronics company. He worked hard and sent Caroline and Michael to school. The family had a difficult time communicating with people, because they did not know English. They had to migrate to this country suddenly; they did not have time to learn English.

They really needed to learn English. Tony worked all day, and after work he went to school to learn English. Every day he came home late after school, and on some nights he did the school homework late—after his kids went to bed.

Tony worked very hard to get his driver's license. He really needed it for his family's survival. Three years later he graduated from San José City College. Now, Tony has got a good job and he makes good money.



Tony has been hard-working, strong willed, and intelligent in making his family happy. Tony Nguyen is really my hero.

Debra

by Abraham

My hero is Debra. I meet Debra at the library. She is my tutor for spelling. I was very happy because Debra is so good in explaining spelling slowly. I get help with writing and sentences, too. Now I can read the book okay. This will help reading to be more interesting. I will work hard with her.



Abraham likes to study grammar and likes to use computers to send emails.

Teens Have it Hard

by Corina Rath

My hero is my daughter Corina. Not only her, but all teenagers that make it through tough times in their lives. I feel teens have it hard in schools and in their homes. When my daughter was in junior high school, I divorced her father. As a result of the divorce, her emotional stability was weakened and she almost didn't graduate junior high school.

I think about all that she has gone through, and how the media has had a negative influence on her. Yet she still stays in school. It is difficult for teens to attend school and get a good education. Lots of kids are being raised in single-parent homes, or if both parents are in the home they both work. Classrooms have more students, and there are not enough teachers to go around.

When Corina began going to high school, she became a different person. She did well in school and even got involved in school activities. She was a cheerleader all through high school. She even encouraged some of her friends to get involved in school activities.



Corina graduated from high school, and I was so proud of her. It is hard for teenagers to graduate from high school, and it is easier for them to drop out of school or turn to drugs and drinking. When our children graduate or do something good in life, we need to let them know that we are proud of them and that they are our heroes.

Thank you, Corina, for being my hero.

My Hero: Dr. J. Ruiz

by Floridalma Rivas

Floridalma has been in the U.S. for two years. She is studying at San José City College. She enjoys PAR, which is helping her improve her English skills. She likes to travel and read in her free time.

To talk about only one person who has been a hero in my life is very difficult because there are many people that I consider to be my heroes, and I admire them for doing something very brave or good. Today, I chose one of them, Dr. J. Ruiz. He was my co-worker in a public hospital named La Trinidad. He taught me things about my profession in several ways. First of all, he taught me a lot of qualities that a doctor should have to give excellent attention to their patients. For example, he recommended that I stay calm in adverse situations, such as when a pregnant woman has seizures or bleeding and needs urgent attention. If I am relaxed I can think clearly, so I can solve problems, especially in some situations in which the life of the mother or the child is in danger.



Another important thing that he taught me was to have patience and to listen to people because they are often anxious and need understanding and trust that someone will listen and believe them and help them to solve their problems. He said to me, "You should never forget that your patients will be your best teachers, and you can learn from them."

In addition, he helped me have confidence in myself and never doubt my skills and knowledge. Also, he helped me to develop my surgical skills. He was my assistant during my first surgery as a gynecologist, and he was always there when I needed him. For example, he came immediately when I had difficult cases such as complications during delivery, bleeding during surgery, and other problems.

In other words, he trained me to respond adequately to all the moments that a doctor faces every day. In summary, these were some of the most important things that he taught me and the reason why he is one of the people that made a difference in my life. He died, but his teachings live with me, and he always will be one of my heroes.

It Takes a Strong Woman to Do What She Does

by Janeen Robbins

Janeen lives in San José with her boyfriend and pets, a dog and an iguana (who actually get along very well). She just started working out at a gym and enjoys working out, babysitting, and going to the movies. She has been with PAR for many years, and has seen a big improvement in her reading and writing. Janeen works as a special education aide for the county.

This page is dedicated to my friend Melissa

My hero is my best friend, Melissa. I first met her about 10 years ago, when I was working with her son Zachary as a one-to-one aide in a county program.

Melissa is a single mom with two autistic sons aged 17 and 15 years old. She is always picking them up from school and taking them to different places in the community. She also takes care of her sick mother, who needs to be taken to dialysis three times a week.

Melissa is a caring and giving person. She gave her sons and mother the bedrooms in their house and sleeps on the couch in the living room. Two years ago she had to take her family to a motel to live for six months after her house burned.

Melissa is a friend to me in many ways. She trusts me to babysit her sons every weekend, and I have become very close to them. She says that she is very proud of me for staying with the Partners in Reading program, and says that she notices the improvement in my reading and writing.

Melissa is my hero because she is a fantastic mom and a fantastic friend.

My Hero

by Thanh Tran

Thanh was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the United States with his mother when he was a teenager. His dad was an American soldier during the Vietnam War, and his mom is Vietnamese. He is married and has three children. He is studying for his citizenship exam and hopes to become a citizen in the next couple of years.

My hero is my grandmother. She is a hard worker. She is tall and skinny with a strong back and strong shoulders. When I was very young until I was 13, I lived with my grandmother, my mom, and my aunt. Four uncles lived there, too. She told jokes. She took me with her to visit her cousin by bus. That was the first trip I ever took. A couple of years later she told my mom to take the train to somewhere, and I was very happy to be on the train. That was the first time.

She asked my mom to make paperwork to go to America. My mom said "Why?" and my grandmother said, "It is good for both of you and for the family." Also she asked my mom, "Remember the radio, they were asking for that?" One night my mom was listening to the BBC radio. Two local policemen heard, and next morning they came and asked her to either not listen or donate it to the government. "Yes, I remember."

My grandmother also said to remember "the job your sister has right now." My mom and her sister had applied for a job in one company owned by the government. They denied my mom. The reason they denied her was because she was married to an American soldier. At that time there were no private companies, only government-owned companies. Since she was denied by that company she couldn't get hired anywhere because all companies were government-owned only.

I remember one afternoon, I asked my grandmother if I could help carry that bag for her. On the way home, people she knew they saw that, and they told her, "Your grandson can help you now." She was proud of that. My hero said the most important thing is you study hard. "That will help me and help yourself." She helped me to understand life. I love my hero.

My Hero Is My Tutor

by Emelia Gomez



My hero is my tutor, Joanie. I admire her because she is the one who is teaching me to read. I don't think I would be comfortable with any other person. I liked her when I first met her. She talked with me from day one. She was accepting and very caring. I met her at the library, and we have been working together for two years.

Emelia has three sisters and two brothers. Her hobby is going to action movies. Emelia says, "My experience with PAR: I just love those people. Right now I work with children."

Joanie works with computers and is very smart. She is tall, slender, and she likes to drink coffee and read books. Joanie says I'm her hero because of the strength and determination I show every day. When Joanie was away, the office people asked me if I would like another tutor and I said, "No thanks, I will wait for Joanie."

It is very important to me to read and write. My mom wanted me to learn to read and write because when she was young her father made her stay home from school and go to work in the fields to make money. So when my mom passed on I said, "Mom, I promise you. I am going to finish my school." This is why my hero is my tutor Joanie.



Unsung Heroes

by Darryl Redfield

Darryl's tutor writes: "Darryl is a joy to have for a learner. I have known him for more than three years and am so pleased with his progress."

Let me tell you about my heroes.

I have more heroes than I can write about on two pages, but let me give it a whirl. My heroes do not know that they are heroes to me. Each week I see them working hard to perfect the art of reading and writing. You may think it's unusual to have learners as heroes, nevertheless the learners inspire me to work harder to reach my goals to become a better reader and writer.

One learner in the next room loudly studies his sounds. I admire his determination, I know how difficult it is, please don't stop. Another learner I met when I got started always told me, "Don't give up, it's hard, but keep going."



I have a hectic schedule with work, school, and family life, and sometimes it's hard to schedule the lessons. Sometimes I feel like this:

The clock is my dictator, I shall not rest. It makes me lie down only when exhausted. It leads me to deep depression, it hounds my soul. It leads me in circles of frenzy for activity's sake. Even though I run frantically from task to task, I will never get it all done, for my "ideal" is with me. Deadlines and my need for approval, they drive me. They demand performance from me, beyond the limits of my schedule. They anoint my head with migraines; my in-basket overflows. Surely fatigue and time pressure shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the bonds of frustration forever.

Marcia K. Hornok, "Psalm 23, Antithesis"

I think about the other learners in their hectic schedules and their family life, and work, and still they make it here to study hard. Some families make it to Families for Literacy (FFL) during the week. It makes me realize I'm not the only one who has a busy lifestyle.

I was blessed with two artists who took my mind and molded it into a phenomenal reading machine; they are heroes, too. This year I read *Of Mice and Men*, my first novel.

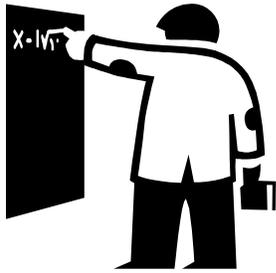


I would like to say "Thank you" to all my unsung heroes who have encouraged me so much. Thank you, PAR.

My Hero, My Son

by Francisco Reyes

My hero is my son Bryan. He is working hard studying in school. Because Bryan is progressing well in all subjects, his teachers are very happy. He always does his homework and brings it back to school. Bryan



helps the other students and helps his sister in their subjects. Bryan wants to go to college. I am proud of my son Bryan.

Francisco was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States in 2000.

Married, with two children, Francisco believes that it is important to learn about other cultures and their languages.

Francisco believes that children are this country's future.

A Hero Doesn't Give Up on You

by Anthony Ramirez

My godmother is very supportive, joyful, lovable, caring, outgoing, and is always there for me in a time of need. She has been in my life since I was 6 months old, and she has loved me since I was a little baby and after I turned into a grown man. A hero doesn't give up on you even if you give up on yourself.



Anthony is a hard worker and has a lot of goals for his life. He is making them happen.

My Inspiration

by Balbir Singh



Balbir came to the U. S. in 1980 from India, where she completed the third grade. She has four children and three grandchildren. She is an extremely motivated learner and has been working with PAR for about 2½ years. She hopes to speak, read, and write English well, so that one day she can teach others and help her grandchildren as well.

When asked, “Who is my hero?” without a doubt, the first person that came to my mind was my dear grandmother. She was and will always be my inspiration, teacher, mother, and best friend. She was a very hard-working and smart lady.

My life in India, during the time when I was physically with her, was full of pain, darkness, and loneliness. She was the one thing in my life that was good. She would tell me stories, watch out for me, tell me about her life and teach me philosophies that she learned. She was the only person who would go out of her way for me, believed me and had faith in me. Many people in the village where I grew up respected her, and to me she was a gift from God. She was a very honest person. My whole family did not see that I was worth anything but for cooking and doing all the chores. My grandmother, however, would remind me of how precious she thought I was. When I think of her or talk about her, it makes me happy.

My circumstances in life have been very bad, and her teachings have given me the strength, power, faith, and ability to overcome all those hard times. When I think of her, I smile and almost cry because she brought hope to the girl who was supposed to be hopeless. She did not have an education because at that time women did not have a school. She taught me to gain knowledge by listening and watching other people. Because of her influence, I learned to adapt and overcome hardships. I wish I could give her a hug, kiss her, and thank her for coming into my life. I had to face a lot of challenges in my life, which I overcame because of my dear grandmother. All those challenges taught me a great deal about life. Today I am a very happy person, mentally and spiritually, because of my grandmother's lessons.

Rose Showed Us How

by Emebet Akalewold

My hero is Rose. She has been Director of Nursing at the Sub-Acute Saratoga Children's Hospital for more than 16 years and has extensive experience in critical care. She provides ongoing leadership and education in Nursing Systems Development and promotes quality care.

She is a very hard worker. The way she works makes all employees work hard. The hospital is very neat and clean. I watched my bosses in my previous jobs, and they didn't do things like Rose. They told us to do our job, but Rose showed us how to do our job. That makes Rose my hero.

Emebet has been in the program for 1½ years. She is improving her English, which helps her at work.

My Hero Is My Dad

by Megnaga Aimru

Megnaga came to the United States September 11, 1996. When she first went to school, she was nervous because she didn't speak English. Now she speaks English well, and is attending San José City College, where she wants to get a degree in child development. She started working with PAR in summer 2010.

My hero is my dad, who came from Ethiopia to California when I was small. He brought my family to San José. When I was ten he went to school to learn English, and worked for the police office. That was his favorite job.

When I was little, my dad was always there for me if I got hurt. He knew when I was sad. If I needed something, he would get it for me. He always took me to play tennis. When I went to school my dad always walked with me.

When I turned 18, my dad took me to the beach. We went in the water, played games, went on rides, and ate a lot. We had cake when we got home. It was my best birthday ever.

My dad is strong, and he always tells me to be strong, to try my best, and to follow my heart.

When my dad gets old, I will be there for him. No matter what happens, I will always love him, and he will always be my hero.