

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

STORIES, etc.

A Story to Make My Tutor Laugh by Uwe Keilitz

In a galaxy far, far away a teacher named Rebecca is teaching people to read and understand better as she sweeps through the galaxy to help all the people in the world.

~~ His tutor wrote back, "In a city very, very near Tucson, a student named Uwe is learning to read and understand better as he sweeps through the universe to learn everything he possibly can – even guitar playing!"

WHAT LVT MEANS TO ME by Jeff

I spent quite a bit of time looking for a program to help me with my spelling difficulties. I was very surprised to find that there is little help available. LVT has given me a chance to learn and to gain confidence with my spelling and writing skills. Their volunteer tutors are extremely generous with their time. They offer one-on-one sessions which have helped me focus and learn at a much quicker pace. I am very grateful for LVT and their volunteers. They give a great gift. For me that gift is a better life for myself and my family. Not being able to spell has kept me from doing a lot of things in my life. LVT is helping me change that. LVT has also showed me the importance of giving back and helping others.

~~ Jeff's tutor says he is making remarkable progress toward his goals.

GOOD NEWS!

Karmaleen Isaac recently registered – in person! - for free GED classes at Pima Community College. She starts in late March and will again drive on busy streets and the expressway to get to the campus. ☺ WOW! Karmaleen, that took a lot of initiative, courage and smarts. Keep up the good work! You can get anywhere with a map and a plan.



Send us your best stuff!

Literacy Ventures needs your best stuff! Submit Stories (and "etc."), Good News items or Tips, Notes and Ideas in an email to ventures@lovetoread.org.

Be sure to include your name as you wish it to appear and a title for your Story. You may also include a short 'blurb' for your Story if you wish to do so.

Find details at <http://www.lovetoread.org/lvt-community/students/literacy-ventures>.



LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

SAVING VENUS by Steven Horstmann

Hi, my name is Stephen. Let me tell you my story. I was on Venus. My Father's friend was in a lab. He was trying to create a star — and did. But a man named Jones got jealous. He put too many atoms in the star. We had ten seconds until the star blew up.

We had another problem — the star, a blue orb, was growing and it got so big it broke out of its glass. When it broke the glass, the orb started to pull things into it and that meant us. So we had to run for it, but not all of us made it out.

Then the orb got so big it blew up. But we didn't realize Venus went out of orbit and was heading toward the sun.

When the sun rose, Rob, my friend, said: "The sun rise is a little too big."

Then we all looked at the sunrise. The sun filled the entire sky. Another friend, Rick, got his solar GPS and found out the planet was out of orbit and getting closer to the sun moment by moment.

We had to think fast. We ran back inside the lab and I said: "We need to make another orb fast."

"But that took hours," Rob pointed out. Ignoring him, we worked fast to build an orb.

As Venus got closer and closer to the sun, Rick and I were getting done. Rob got a rocket ready. Venus' surface was becoming lava. Then we shot off the orb between Venus and the sun.

Rob, Rick, and I waited for the orb to blow up and the plan worked. Venus was going away from the sun toward Jupiter. As we waited for a ride home, Venus got caught in Jupiter's orbit.

~ To be continued...

~~ Steven says, "I always like to go to other planets. So that's why I wrote it. I can imagine I am going to other worlds."

TIPS, NOTES and IDEAS....

Here are one student's ideas about "how to be a successful LVT student."

1. Make learning a priority. Come to class. Do your work.
2. Be honest about what you don't know. No one ever got help with things they say they already know.
3. Don't be embarrassed. It's a waste of energy.
4. Stick to the topic. Respect the tutors, the other students and yourself.
5. Keep going, even when you don't like the subject. There is an opportunity to learn in every situation.
6. Keep going, even when it seems to be taking forever.
7. Be proud of your achievements.
8. Feel good about who you are and who you are becoming.
9. Have FUN and LAUGH.

What a Surprising Life
by Lulu Rodriguez

Life can give you a lot of surprises, when you do not expect something from it. I think life is a box full of gifts that can be open to you someday.

On the happy New Year of this year, my boyfriend David, gave me an engagement ring in front of all my family. It was really amazing for me and also very surprising because I had never known that I was going to get engaged at the age of twenty one until I realized that a beautiful ring was in front of my eyes.

My mom and dad were beside me. Their eyes looked very surprised. My mom's eyes were tearful. She almost cried.

David was in front of me. He was nervous. I could feel that because his face was red and he did not stop moving from side to side.

He started talking to my family. He just expressed some thankful words about how grateful he was to become part of my family. He then took out a little gray box from his coat and he kneeled down and proposed to me, asking me to marry him.

Oh, my gosh! I was frozen and for a moment I felt like those Disney princesses who had princes in front of them and they thought they were dreaming.

With an excited yes I got engaged with David. He gave me a big hug and said: "Thank you to be part of my life".

Before this happened and before I met David, I used to think that I would never be engaged or get married until I turned 28. It was just not on my plans.

I have to say that when I met David the first time, he looked very arrogant. His face did not look very friendly and actually I did not like him at first. But his attitude and face caught my attention because he has a baby face. His face is very soft and white with pink cheeks and big brown eyes with long eye lashes and curly hair. But even if he has a baby face, he does not act like a baby. He has a very grown up attitude.

On our first date, we went to Starbucks and it was there when I really started to know him. He was not the kind of man I thought he was. He is actually a very cheerful person. When he laughs, he laughs out loud. David always has something to talk about. He loves history and also he is very curious, like curious George. Even if he is 23, he acts like a kid when he really wants to know about something.

We have been together since September 13, 2009 and I have to say that I have a beautiful relationship. More than being a couple, we are friends.

I feel very happy. because I think it is time to write a new chapter in my life and I know that it is going to be very interesting.

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

Life is surprising and sometimes it brings to us a lot of gifts that would never be expected and I am not talking about the beautiful ring. I am talking about the surprises that do not cost too much. They could be a warming hug or a person who wants to spend his life with you.

~~ My name is Lourdes A. Rodriguez. I was born in Hermosillo, Sonora. Since I was born, I lived in Magdalena de Kino, Sonora. I graduated from high school in 2008. I moved to Tucson to start a nursing career.

My Experience at Walt Disney World by Stephanie Meza

I was in Pima Community College going for my basics. One day I went to school and I saw lots of tables of interesting things but there was one stand that got my eye. There was a lot of really interesting facts about Walt Disney World.

I thought I would give it a try and get more information about it. So I did and it sounded like it was a lot of fun. So I applied for it and got a phone interview.

In about a month later, I got a huge envelope from Walt Disney World. The letter said, "Congratulations" and so on. I was so excited that I got on the computer to book my flight and got the lists of what I can and can't bring with me to Florida.

On January ninth of two thousand and seven I was getting ready for a long flight to go to Walt Disney World. My trip from Tucson was to Las Vegas to North Carolina to Orlando. My flight was interesting because in Las Vegas I was waiting for three hours just to get to North Carolina.

When I got there, I went to the next flight but when I saw my ticket, it said Las Vegas to North Carolina. So, I went to fix it and got a Florida ticket.

The next morning I arrived in Florida. I was getting off the plane and I looked a mess, and didn't have time to get ready for seeing my Dad's friend. She went to pick me up and take me to Vista Way to get started.

When I got there they told me that I had training and free schooling and I had to pick out an apartment and there were five of them to pick. I picked the place called Chadam Square Apartments. There were other apartments called Vista Way, Tree House, Wilmot Vista and Comandas Apartment. So when I got there, I saw my roommates. There were seven girls and me at the same apartment.

Two weeks later, I had a training class before I started to work. It's about how Walt Disney World started and what the secret is to keeping families happy. So I had to start school soon after training. I took communication class and marketing you class. It was fun and not hard at all. I also started my job at MGM Studios. My job was a ticket taker. I took the ticket to the machine and it read it before guests get into the theme park. I did

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

that for a while because I had to take a test and failed twice. So they transferred to crowd control. So my job for crowd control was to put the guest behind the line. They could sit or stand before the parade and the high school musical float. Also, we were in charge of the shows, too. The shows are Beauty and the Beast and the Fantasmic Show. After the show we cleaned up the theater.

At the parade we also kept a close watch on kids because they might get run over. After the parade was over they can be part of the parade. We also give Showtime and Disney guide maps, too. Also, they asked us about how long it lasts or where is the way out.

You could say we made families very happy or made their day magical for them. Also, we had packs of special pins to give out that was called magical moment. Magical moment pins are given to a person that does good or something special.

The cool thing that this job gave me is a lot of discounts for food and merchandise. I could get into the theme parks and water parks for free. So I went to the parks on my own time.

Also, there are many foundations that come to Walt Disney World and we make that very special for them. For example, I was working to set up for the parade and I was putting the parents in the back and the children in the front of the parade. My section was getting full. One family was standing in the back with their little girl who was in a wheelchair. She couldn't see so I decided that I would put her in front with me. She was part of the Make a Wish Foundation. I saw her face and she was so happy that I wanted to cry because I made her and her family very happy.

Finally, Walt Disney World was not what I expected. I had a great time there. I wish my time lasted longer there. I would love to go back there again.

~~ Hi, my name is Stephanie Meza. I'm twenty-three years old. I'm a Latina young lady who enjoys life to take a chance on opportunities.

My Story by Dede Gbele

In 1959, when my mother met my father she was nineteen and already had one child with her school teacher when she was only sixteen. That child is my older sister.

I don't know that much about my father because he left my mother in Togo after having two kids with her. In 1964 he went back to Ivory Coast because I believe that he and my mother were having some problems after his first wife and his other kids moved to Togo to join him.

In 1968, according to his brothers and sisters, he was planning to come back in our life to allow us to know him, but sadly that dream never came true for us. He planned to visit us in September of that year but a month before that he had the accident.

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

My big sister was five, I was two and we had a new baby sister when our father died in the boat accident. He used to work at the harbor for the government.

My dream to know him was dead and became the challenge point in my whole life. According to his brothers he was very concerned about how we were doing and wished things were different between my mother and him. His brother said that he went to work that day and never came home to his kids and wives. They found his body three days later. My father "Jerome" left behind twelve kids, seven girls and five boys. The tragedy happened in August.

I remember when I was between five and six years old, my mother used to take us to my grandfather's house where my father was living with his other brothers. They were very nice to my mother and us. When we visited his brothers in Aneho-Togo in my grandfather's hometown (it's my mother's hometown too), they told us about him and made sure we knew how much he loved us. Even though he left us behind, my father sent child support to my mother most of the time. My mother, Dorcas, never told us the reason of their separation.

Before my father's death, I was very proud to be my daddy's three year old little girl. Most of the people who knew him always said that I looked just like him and that he was happy to have me. They said that he was a handsome gentleman. I was happy to have him as a father even though I did not record any memories of him. For me, he's a father I would like to know but life decided that to be the way it is and will always be.

Talking about a father I never knew is the most difficult thing. But I must thank God, who knows the whole mystery, and the loving people who knew him and shared his stories with me. Up to now, when I remember that I can never call my father "daddy" or "papa" in my whole life it just bring tears in my eyes! My question is "Why?"

~~ Dede came to the U.S. in 2007 from Togo, West Africa. She is the mother of five children, three of whom survive. After completing her GED, she hopes to major in Theology. Her goal is to become a spiritual leader.

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

Fiesta De Los Vaqueros by Carlos

The parade for the famous fiesta in Tucson, Arizona is celebrated every year on February 24th. Last year my family and I went to the parade. It was the first time we were at the parade in Tucson but it was fun because we didn't plan to go.

That time I was in school and I took a half-day from school to go. It worked because I picked up my family and took them to the parade. We arrived late because I was not sure what time the parade started, but the point was, we went and celebrated "La Fiesta De Los Vaqueros!"

We parked on the street, Park Avenue and Irvington Street, near the Circle K. We saw a little spot and I told my wife, "Here is a good point to see the parade." There were a lot of people around us but we found a good spot to see it. We enjoyed the last part of the parade but at that time my kids started getting bored so my wife said, "Let's go home." They started to get tired because we were standing an hour and a half! I said, "Let's go!" and we took off from the parade.

This year I had plans to go again but something extra happened. I went to the job fair and school so I told my wife, "You take the kids to the parade and enjoy the day," but she was a little sick. She didn't take the kids to the parade because this time my kids didn't want to go either. I saw that they were tired. They wanted to take a break at home, so I left them and didn't insist more. I understand that they need their own time and should decide if they want to go to the parade again.

~~ Carlos is a member of the LVT writing workshop.

Life Can Change by Marty C.

Back in the years before I was in eighth grade, I was doing good in school. At first I was moving right along from first grade to fourth. Then things changed. I started to notice that my reading was bad but I still kept moving up grades even though I was getting C's and F's (except for my Art class where I got A's and A-pluses). I did not want to go to the next grade! I was not ready for it. My reading and spelling were making me feel ashamed.

Then, at the end of eighth grade, my teacher told me I would be going on to high school the next year. I remember this like it was yesterday. I said to Mrs. Flores, "I can't go to high school," and she asked, "Why not?"

I said, "Because I can't spell or read good," and she replied, "You will be okay for you have passed the grade."

I was mad for the rest of the day and at the end of my last class I went to the principal's office and spoke to Mr. Baum about my problem. He said, "Well, Marty, we need the room."

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

"The room?" I asked. He said, "Yes, for the new kids who are coming in." I looked at him and walked out of his office for the very last time and that is when my life first changed.

I went into a world of rebellion. In high school I met other teenagers like myself, and they would drink beer before and after class. That is when I started to drink as well and it went on for the last years of my school days, as a young man and even as I got older.

Then, three years ago, on January 31st, 2009, I had my last beer but I didn't know it yet. Yes, I had always prayed that I would stop drinking for many years. Then, on February 1st, a new morning came to me; my prayers were answered! I woke up that morning and it seemed like something was missing. For a few days I was not sure why I felt like that and then one night I thought, "I have not wanted a beer or a smoke at all!" I didn't feel a need for a beer. It was just gone!! Even if someone got me mad, there was no desire for it, none at all. I was so content knowing that 31 years of drinking were behind me and gone!

I'm so happy I made it through all of that part of my life. Now, here I am at Literacy Volunteers of Tucson getting help. I'm going to be able to write a letter to my mom for the first time ever. Some day I will get my G.E.D. that I've been wanting since I was a kid.

Not knowing what's going to happen in the future is okay because right now all I have is my present and I will keep an open mind about what I have at this time in my life. It feels good knowing I'm getting help for my spelling, reading and math from my new family here at L.V.T. I am liking it more and more!

The tutors here are helping us students a lot. I love that they care. I have also been asked to be a Student Ambassador for L.V.T. At first I felt nervous and I told Susan, "I might mess up," since I didn't know what an ambassador does. But she gave me the confidence I needed so I said, "All right, I'll do it."

I know this is going to help me also to get out of myself. That is what I mean by keeping an open mind and it's what we all need. In fact, just the other week I was asked to help a new student who was coming in for her first day. I didn't hesitate to tell Susan "Yes," right away. Susan introduced Francis to me and at first I saw in her eyes that she was nervous and wanting help as I did. I simply told her how the students tend to help each other, and that the tutors are very helpful as well and not to be ashamed to ask questions, for all of us students have needs in different places. Finally I told her "whatever you do, don't leave! Give yourself some time here to see for yourself that you are changing."

Yes, there is so much to think about now and I'm learning that it's not all about me! I'm seeing the future and it looks good! I am surrounded by people who care and who are helping me to improve my life and I love them all.

So this is my new *Life for Changes*. I have always heard that it's not how you start; it's how you finish!

~~ Marty is a member of the LVT writing workshop.

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

My Father's Crest Is Not our Family's Coat of Arms

Richard Holguin

In the summer of 1938 or 1939 there were two boys digging a hole in an empty lot to make a bonfire so they could cook potatoes. They put the potatoes on the end of a hanger over the fire.

The empty lot was in barrios of East Los Angeles. It was called Tortilla Flats. This is where they grew up Lorenzo Jr., Carlos, Rudy, Salvador, Rita and Manuel are brothers and sisters.

The two boys were about 10 and 11 years old. One of the boys is my Dad, Carlos, and his younger brother, Rudy.

While digging this hole Carlos hit the crest. He didn't know what it was. Digging the rest of it out my father and his brother Rudy took the crest home. Later they cleaned the crest and hung it on the wall.

The crest hung on the wall for about five years. During that time, my uncle Manuel got real sick. To keep him from being bored, they gave the crest to Manuel to paint so the colors are not the original ones.

At sixteen years old my father left High School. He went to work with his mother, Agustina Garcia Holguin. My father and his mom worked at a defense plant making bombs. When my father decided he didn't want to stay at home anymore he went into the army at seventeen.

His older brother, Lorenzo Jr., came out of the army and got married and when he saw the crest hanging on the wall he wanted to take it home with him. Lorenzo's brother, Rudy and his mom told him that it belonged to his brother Carlos.

When my dad came back from the army his mom and dad owned a small grocery store on Geraghty Avenue in East Los Angeles. The store was downstairs and the house was upstairs where my father's family lived. The house was so big that two families could live in there.

So my Dad's father, Lorenzo Holguin, Sr., rented half of the house to Guadalupe Gonzalez, my mom's mother and her four kids: Yolanda, Maria, Emilia, and Ignacio. Emilia is my mom. So if you think about it my parents lived in the same house. So that means they couldn't tell us that we couldn't live with our girlfriends before we got married. Ha! Ha!

Anyway, my father met one of the beautiful daughters and they fell in love. My parents got married in court in Los Angeles on February 24, 1949. One year later they got married in the church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the old church in East Los Angeles.

My mom and dad bought their first home at 1017 N. Geraghty Avenue in East Los Angeles where they hung my father's crest on the wall for about twenty five more years. My parents had five kids: Gloria, Carlos, Jr., Richard, Gilbert and Monica.

After I graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1971 my parents moved to La Puente and then again to Hacienda Heights and the last house in Montebello on Hendricks St. where they live now.

The crest hung on the wall for another thirty years.

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

After having this crest for about seventy three years, my father called me to come over. Wrapped in a towel he handed me the crest. I asked him, "Are you sure you want to give this to me?" "Yes," he said. "I know you will take care of it." I also know the reason why he gave me the crest.

My father is eighty two years old now and my father and mom are not in good health. So they're giving away their things.

I must of cried all the way home from Los Angeles to Arizona knowing why he gave the crest to me.

The crest is now my unofficial family crest (coat of arms) next to our family crest.

It is now hanging in my house. It is about eighty years old now.

I don't know what the crest is made of. But on the top of it is half a crown and in the middle of the crest there are nine leaves that look like the New Orleans Saints emblem. On the left top corner is a castle. And on the right top corner is a lion wearing a crown. On the bottom left is a lion with a crown and on the bottom right is another castle.

And today I still don't know where it came from.

~~ Richard is a member of the LVT writing workshop.

LaLa means Love by Teresa Ramirez

Hola! My name is Teresa and my short story is about my four grandchildren. Savannah is the first and she is nineteen years old. Wenceslo is the second and he's thirteen years old. Isaiah is my third and he's thirteen years old. Violet is fourth, she is in the "terrific" twos but she is my number one!

When they were born I was in the delivery room with all of them. Savannah was born with a cone-shaped head. She was unique. I remember Wenceslo because he weighed 7-11 like the store 7-11. Isaiah I remember because of his big, big feet. My last born, Violet, was very, very tiny and had lots of black hair.

I thank the Lord for giving me my grandchildren. We like to gather on Sundays and have lunch and talk about what went on during the week.

If I had known how much fun grandchildren were, I'd have had them first! My grandchildren gave me the name "LaLa." I tell them "LaLa" means "Love."

Sincerely, LaLa

~~ Teresa is a member of the LVT writing workshop.

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

My First Vacation by Tina Maclean

We drove to California- my husband and his sons and daughter and my cousin Kayla- in a jeep. We went to the beach and my shoe got filled with sand. We all went to Sea world. There was a person dressed as a chipmunk standing by the ticket booth. We all walked in to where the whales and dolphins were in a tank. Then they put on a show. The whales did full circles and flips. The dolphins stood up and clapped their fins. The seal was jumping and splashing in the water and a white whale was swimming in a tank.

We got in the car to go to the beach. It was incredible. The water was cold. It was the first time I saw the ocean. It was overwhelming. I was so full of excitement I didn't want to leave. This was my first time in the ocean. The girls were running on the sand. I went back in the water and was trying to stand up but couldn't do it. To the girls on shore, it looked like I was surfing. The waves knocked me down. I got wet a lot. Then we got out of the water. My husband and I stood with our backs to the water. A wave came in and I found a shell.

Then we went to Legoland We sat down and ate lunch by the whale. Then we went to see the birds and horses. A woman fed the bird. It got in the lady's pocket. We went to see the penguins who stood and looked at us. We also saw the polar bear. J.C.'s son and I sat in a cave where the polar bear was swimming and holding a bottle. We visited the gift shop where J.C. stood by a polar bear statue. We all walked around to see the things made out of Legos. There was a man and a city, a boat and a little town. The kids and J.C. went on a ride that got them wet.

Then we went back to the hotel. We had dinner at a restaurant. We drove back home that night.

~~ Tina is a member of the LVT writing workshop.

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

Flash Drive by Carlos Yazzie

The journey started from the job service at 190 W. Irvington over on the south side of Tucson. I went over there to see if they have any jobs I might be interested in. I talked to the U.A. job representative and found out they don't have the job I was looking for. The job representative and I talked about a very important job that's going to exist in the near future (Solar Energy Specialist). I decided that solar energy was very important to me and my home back on the reservation. The job representative referred me to another agent on the north side of Tucson. We discussed the requirements and what kinds of tools I need to pursue this new career training. He referred me to Kino One Stop at 2797 South Ajo Way and told me to talk to those people over there. I went there for assistance on where and how to go about my new career. They told me I can go back to school or get on the job training or go to any institution where I can learn more about my new career. Kino One Stop offers some programs like Career Exploration, Resume Writing, Basic Computer skills and Computer Fundamentals. These programs are a requirement to get funds from the state and county government for the schooling that I need to start my new career. To improve or upgrade my skill levels and scores, I signed up for some computer classes. Computer skills are what I need in order to keep up with today's technology in a job and everyday living. I found out that computer was one of the tools to performance in my new career and those computer classes are required to go up to the next level toward my new career.

While I was there attending classes, I found out a lot of good subjects like employment information, on the job training and etc. There are representatives who can tell you whatever you want to know and also there are representatives from the Veterans Administration. If you are a veteran, you can find out if you have any kind of benefit coming to you from the military you served in. There are jobs in connection with the military.

A flash drive is a handy personal device that provides wide storage capacity and is a simple tool that allows you to store content. Using a flash drive to store data is simple and convenient. So, drive on!

~~ Carlos is a member of the LVT writing workshop.

My First Job by Warren Fayuant

Do you remember your first job? Well, I do and this is how I got hired on a Sunday in May, 1996. I was 17 years old living in an independent living situation, basically a state run program, a group home, more or less. I had my own studio apartment fully furnished with a t.v. and brand new kitchen wear. My only responsibilities were to go to school and have a part time job to pay rent.

As a child, I grew up on the Tohono O'odam reservation. I attended school 10 miles away. I hung out after school, did my homework and chores, but to work for a living and pay rent was a revelation. It was very scary and I couldn't see myself in a large city until I was placed in the living situation in 1996.

It was late May which meant school was almost out, and also meant I had more time to look for a job. I had never filled out an application before, so all I was able to write was my basic name and address and contact information. I never lived in Tucson before so I basically just walked down the streets and asked the local businesses if they were hiring. I walked in all directions, even to the El Con Mall which was very active then. I had no luck those first 3 weeks. I was becoming discouraged and doubtful. Who would hire me?

I called businesses in the phone book, I looked up places and boldly asked, "Are you hiring?" Days went by. I began to feel this guilt hanging over me. Finally one day I locked myself in my apartment and slept all day. My counselor knocked on my door and said, "Are you o.k.? It's 3 p.m. and I haven't seen you all day. Why don't you go look for a job?" It was a Sunday afternoon.

I was so angry and resentful at my counselor, but I took a stroll west on Speedway. I decided that I would walk for an hour one way, then turn around and walk back, applying along the way. In the middle of May the temperature is at least upper 90's. I had a Polo t-shirt and jeans. So you can imagine me walking down the street applying for jobs while I looked like a wet rag, sweat pouring down my face, trying to smile and be attractive.

I came up to the KFC on Speedway and I thought to myself, "Chicken. I love chicken and mashed potatoes topped off with mac and cheese." So I said to myself, "Why not!" I walked into KFC and all I could hear was this 20 year old short white girl screaming her head off. "I need a number 3 extra crispy with a side of slaw." There was a line of 4 people and I was the 5th person. From what I could see it was complete chaos. I could see flour on the floor, wrapping paper everywhere, mashed potatoes in a huge plastic bucket with a scooper in it. It was a complete mess. In all my life I had never seen a fast food restaurant that bad. I felt sorry for the little girl and her 3 employees. I felt guilty for asking for a job. They didn't want to be bothered by me. Those were my thoughts just before it was my turn at the counter.

When it was my turn, the white girl seemed taller and very intimidating. She asked, "How can I help you?" My reply was, "Hi, my name is Warren. Are you hiring?" Her eye blew up. All she said was, "Yes!" Then she turned around and looked at her staff who was busy running around the place like wind up toys. Then she looked at me again with a huge smile. "When can you start?" I said, "As soon as possible, tomorrow, next week."

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

Then to my surprise she said, "How about right now!" I said, "Right now?" "Yeah!" I was in shock and I think she was, too.

Are you sure?" I asked. "Yes, do you want to work or not?" Then I said, "Yes, but I need to go home and tell my uncle (my counselor) that I'm starting today. Is that o.k.?" She said, "Yes." And I ran all the way from Speedway and Country Club to Speedway and Alvernon. I ran as fast as I could.

When I got there my counselor was surprised to see my half out of breath and half excited. I told him, "I got a job!" He was excited. He asked, "When do you start?" I said, "Today." The only reason I went back was to let him know. Then he laughed and told me, "Go back...you could have just called." I felt like an idiot. Why didn't I just call? I was just too excited, but I ran all the way back to KFC.

Yes. That was my first job. It wasn't so bad. I spent the first 6 months cleaning up the prep areas, making mashed potatoes, preparing orders and eating all the free chicken I could eat. Since that day I got my first job, I've always had the belief that any day is a good day to look for a job, whether it's Monday or Sunday or late afternoon. Anything is possible.

~~ Warren is a member of the LVT writing workshop.



Congratulations to each of the contributors to this,
the first issue of Literacy VENTURES of Tucson.

Our goals are, as these authors have written:

- to read and understand better,
- to give back and help others,
- to think fast and tell our stories,
- to find the true gifts in life,
- to give it a try and maybe (!) go to Disney World,
- to deal with life the way it is and be proud,
- to understand things from others' points of view,
- to overcome our fears,
- to recognize and treasure the things that matter,
- to love our families: the ones we get and the ones we make,
- to jump into the sea joyfully, even when the water is cold,
- to drive on toward our goals, and
- to believe that anything is possible.

