

# LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

## STORIES, etc.

### My Journey

I would like to tell you why I wanted to become a Reading Seed volunteer. When I when I was in elementary school I did not speak English very well or understand it. I was only given paper, crayons, and clay. I sat in the back of the classroom and watched as the other kids learned. I wanted to learn what the teacher was writing on the chalkboard. I was never taught the basics that we all need to know in order to read and write. My inability to read or write as an adult has brought a lot of depression into my life. After many years, I found Literacy Volunteers of Tucson. One of the reasons that I feel that I have been doing so well is my tutor. My tutor has been there for me and is always so positive. She is always coming up with new ideas to help me learn and she has a lot of patience. She has had to go back to the basics with me and I am now seeing improvements in my reading and writing. Literacy Volunteers has helped. I discovered what fun it is to read. It has opened a whole new world to me. I started to volunteer at an elementary school in August. I have already seen some improvements in some of the kids that I read with. I have made improvements in my reading and spelling too. Now I can understand what I am reading. I love to read! I want to help the kids learn to love to read, too. I want to make sure that no one goes through what I went through as a child.

## GOOD NEWS!

The Literacy Connects booth at the Tucson Festival of Books was a big hit this year. MANY photos of it were posted on the official Facebook page for the Festival, including the “closing shot,” shown here.



# Thank you!

Marty Calanche and Uwe Keilitz,  
Student Ambassadors  
and “superstar” booth volunteers!

# Thank you!



**Literacy Ventures needs your best stuff!**

Find out how to submit your best stuff at  
<http://www.lovetoread.org/lvt-community/students/literacy-ventures>.



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## TIPS, NOTES and IDEAS....



### **Pride** **by Bernie Romo**

Pride is great when you talk about your family's heritage.

Use pride at work so no one will step on you or hold you back.

Show your pride when you are with the ones you love.

It will hold your head up high.

Talk with pride when you have accomplished a goal

or been thanked for helping a friend.

I must warn you.

Be careful with your pride.

If you read the history of wars in our past you can see pride slither through the words like a snake through grass.

Pride has split brother from brother.

Mother from child and families from God.

Pride will hide in your thoughts like a chameleon changing its colors so it can't be seen.

Too much pride and you will end up alone with a handful of regrets.

So when you're with the ones you love, having a one on one with your teenager or

a disagreement with your partner leave your pride outside and

you will be able to listen with your heart and not your pride.

### **Admiration** **by Sandra Romo**

There are so many people in my life I can't help but admire. As an adult it is so hard to find help to overcome ones weakness. I am so grateful for all the volunteers at LVT. They unselfishly give up their personal time to help strangers. Some people they help come from other countries, trying to make a different life for themselves. Some of the other people they help have learning disabilities that back then were unknown, others in their youth, were just passed through the system as part of a total number to gain school funding. Still others, something may have happened to them in their crucial years of learning, that made them block their life, and as adults they are now paying for those missed years. I am both grateful and thankful that there are still people that care enough to give so much of themselves, to help a stranger.



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## **The First Christmas Eve with our Grandson by Sandra Romo**

Two days before Christmas my husband helped our grandson write his letter to Santa and we put it on the tree. He asked for only one thing, a skateboard. He even drew a picture of the skateboard he wanted, so Santa would not get confused.

On Christmas Eve day in an unexpected surprise, my entire family showed up at our house. Everyone left around 8pm. Our daughter in-law decided to leave our grandson with us, to spend Christmas Eve. I was so happy to have him with us that night. After I put our grandson to bed, my husband and I sat down to relax. Suddenly my husband said "it Christmas Eve, and we are not ready for Santa to come to our house". He quickly jumped up and headed out the door to look for a skateboard. He went to, two stores and they had closed. Finally he arrived at Toys-R- Us and the store was still open. He called me to let me know he found a skateboard and was in line to pay. I asked him, "Does it have a handle"? My husband said "no, it's a skateboard". Of course being an overly protective Grandmother, I said "get him a skate with a handle and three wheels." My husband stated "a scooter! Okay."

On Christmas morning I was so excited to see our grandson's face when he saw the scooter, he looked at the scooter, and said "WOW, that's a cool scooter." Then he went on crawling under and around the Christmas tree. I asked him "what are you looking for Mijo"? He said "I'm looking for the skateboard I ask Santa to bring me." I then pointed at the scooter and said "there it is" He said "no Nana, I asked Santa for a skateboard, and that's a scooter."

As my husband was giving me the, "I told you so" look; there stood a 6 year old boy staring at his letter to Santa. He then said "I drew a picture so Santa wouldn't get confused." He went on to say "I guess Santa is old and probably needs new glasses."

Needless to say, he got his level one skateboard two weeks later, and started telling us "I'm practicing because, the tricks are coming".

## **The Man Who Loves Brooms by Uwe Keilitz**

It was late in the afternoon. We had been sitting in silence. Holmes had been reading the newspaper for about 15 minutes when there was a knock on the door. After Holmes said, "Come in," a young man in a black coat appeared. "Sit down. What do you want?"

"Well, Mr. Holmes, it's like this. I own a small business down the street that makes organs. I have 100 people working for me at this company. Someone is stealing brooms. Mr. Holmes, what do I do?"

"I will look into it this afternoon for you. I will come to your company to see what I can do." The man in the black coat said, "Yes, I will be waiting for you at 1."

Without looking up from his newspaper, Holmes said, "I'll try to find out more about that man with long gray hair and a peg leg."

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## **Friend** **by Sandra Romo**

I am so lucky to have a friend, which I hold in such regard. You see around a year ago, one of my friend's parents became completely handicapped. Even though my friend is not the oldest of the family, he has to be the bearer of bad news. He has become the glue that holds the family together. When there has been a difficult issue to deal with, my friend's siblings seem like they would rather stick their heads in the sand like ostriches. I'm not sure if they do it because they are frightened or just don't want to deal with the reality in front of them. Through out the past year, I have seen the sparkle in his eyes turn into a deep distance stare.

During the time my friend's mom lived at home with the family and after she became totally handicapped. I saw my friend take care of her every need. I truly believe it was such a difficult thing for my friend to do, especially since it was his mom. My friend's siblings have helped through it all, but the way my friend has taken on the challenge of taking care of their mom with all the passion, dedication, and love is truly admirable.

This story is about my husband, his sisters and his mother. Even though his mom is not the easiest person to get along with, he has dealt with her feelings, my feelings and frustrations, and his sister's feelings. At times it seems there is no hope for him when dealing with the feeling of four stubborn females. Above it all, he manages to stay positive with smiles and kind words for everyone.

## **The Road to LVT** **by Bernie Romo**

It took 36 years after high school for me to find out that I love to write. Poetry is my passion. I was a normal child until my first year of elementary school, when a dark cloud took a lot of my childhood away and hung around till the sixth grade. Attention deficit disorder is what it left me.

ADD was not heard of back then. Teachers would tell me, "If you're not going to pay attention, be quiet." One day I wrote a story and the teacher read what I wrote to the class so that everyone could laugh. I put my confidence and my pen away.

In high school I had to learn everything the hard way. I kept from writing as much as possible. I could read from a blank piece of paper so no one would know I couldn't write. I survived and made it through high school and graduated. That shows how bad the school system was. I should not have graduated.

Work was hard, even with a computer and spell check. If you don't know the right word, the computer will just fill it in. One day my wife and I were talking about our struggle and decided to do something about it. Then one day we found ourselves in a classroom with others who have the same problems.

I have learned so much from the teachers and all the students. I would like to thank each and every one of you. I am so proud to have had all of you cross my path. I promise never to put my pen down if you all promise to never quit learning.

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## The Dream of My Football Life by Chris Vega

When I was a little boy my dream was to be a football player for the Chicago bears. I started to play football on the street near my house with my brother and friends in the neighborhood. We would have 6 players per team. Before playing football we would pick the team that we are and it was the Wildcats against the Sun Devils. When we would play football I would try to be a running back.

When I would be the running back and I would always try my best in the game. When I would make a touchdown I would do the dance of a winner. After I made a touchdown I would kick the ball to the other team. After kicking the ball I would go on defense. While I was playing football I had gotten a phone call by Coach Santa Cruz to tell me that I had made the football team. Then Santa Cruz told me to go to practice on Monday August, 21 1992. On Monday the 21<sup>st</sup> we started to practice for the big game against Sunnyside here at Pueblo High School on Friday August 25<sup>th</sup> was the first game of the season.

On Friday August, 25 1992 I started to play high school football on my senior year of high school. When I was in the locker room, Coach Santa Cruz told me that I was going to be starting in the game tonight. Then I would go out to the football field to go and stretch for the football game. The game against the Sunnyside Blue Devils started at 7:00 pm. Then coach Santa Cruz had told the whole team that if we win or lose he will be proud of the team. Then he had pulled me aside and told me that I am going to play as a running back.

When the game started the Blue devils had chosen to kick it to us then we had started the game. When they kick it off I ran it to the 40 yard line. Then I ran it to the 50 yard line and my Coach was very happy for me. Then we went back onto the field to the game. When we got on the field the quarterback gave me the play and told me to run in the middle. Then the Quarterback had said hike then the Quarterback had handed me the football. Then when I got the football I ran the football for the touchdown for the first 7 points of the game.

Then when we kicked the ball to the Blue Devils we had stopped them at the 19 yard line. When the quarterback said hike Phil Born went thought the quarterback and the center had block Phil and he had broken his neck in the game. The trainer went to check on Born to see how his injury was. The trainer understood that he should get out of the game and out for the season. When Born was down, the team was on one knee while the trainer was checking him out. Then the coach called for one of Born's teammates to replace him on the field. I volunteered to replace Born on the field. The coach said, ok then. Go and do it for the team.

Then when I got out on the field I was so fired up that I was so mad at the Blue Devils. Then when the game had restarted the coach gave us the plays. Then I was ready to knock some heads and the quarterback for taking out Born. Then when the quarterback had said hike I had went through the offence of line and made the quarterback fumble the ball. When I had made the quarterback fumble I got up from the ground and picked up the ball and ran it for another touchdown. Then when I went to the sideline, the coach gave me a big hug and told me good job for grabbing the fumble. I told coach Santa Cruz that I did it for Phillip Born and the rest of the team. Then the cheerleaders came and gave me a hug for the touchdown. We won the football game that night.

*Chris Vega is a dedicated student in the evening Reading & Understanding and Writers Workshop classes.*

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## **My Mother by Mike Martinez**

My mother taught me how to live. I was four years old when she showed me how to ride a bike. It didn't have training wheels. The bike was twice my size. I had to get on a wall to ride it. My mom would help me ride the bike.

I was ten years old when I learned how to drive. My mom let me drive a pickup truck. The truck was a manual. When I tried to stop I pushed the brake but didn't push the clutch. The truck died on me. Then we went crashing through the gate. After that, I knew how to drive a manual car.

I never forgot the time my mother and I went to Sea World. We were there when I got my mother a pearl. The pearl I got for her was a black pearl. Then we made a necklace out of it.

I'm happiest when I sleep. I love to have dreams. My favorite dreams have my mom in them. I believe that she sends me signs. When I have a bad dream with her in it, she is telling me I'm being good. When I have a good dream with her in it, she is telling me I'm being good. I feel she is helping me in my life. She is looking down on me and making sure I do the right thing.



## **My Dreams for Me and My Family by Carmen Morales**

The dream is about to start by me going to school to be better for my family and to be better for myself. I want to learn to write and read better and go back to college so I can teach my kids that school never ends, but is part of life. They can be anybody they want to be and go to school no matter how old they are. They can have a family and still be in school. That is the dream I have for my kids, to go on and on to school and be a doctor or a teacher or a lawyer or anything they want to be.

Another dream is to one day have lots and lots of grandkids and do the same thing for them. School is a part of life that is always with you. Once we finish we'll have better jobs. I also dream of seeing my kids get married and traveling with their whole family, including their husband and wife and their kids, with me and my husband. I see us getting older and putting up with each other. That is the beauty of life.

I see my parents together, and I want to be like them, with me and my siblings always together. I love life because my parents taught me that no matter how bad your life goes, you should always try to better yourself.

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## **Last Summer** **by Jane Katuon**

Last summer, my daughter and I went back home to Marshall Islands. We both called our trip “girls’ little getaway.” It was my daughter’s first visit, which she really loved and enjoyed. As for me, I haven’t been back for almost six years.

It was a 12-hour flight. We finally made it on Wednesday around noon. My first reaction was, “Wow! It feels good to be home.” As we continued on to baggage claim, I noticed that my biological mother was outside, waving and waiting to greet us. Oh, how I wished my adopted mother was next to her waiting on us, most importantly for her to meet my daughter. I know she’s in a better place waiting on us, and that is heaven.

We took our baggage and got on the bus. The bus took us to the checkpoint to wait on the ferry that would take us to the village. It’s called Ebeye. Everyone was lining up to board. It was humid and hot. I was frustrated, tired, and overall anxious to see my families. We got to the village in twenty minutes. We went and greeted our family from my biological side, then took a cab to my home, where I grew up with my adopted family.

When I first entered the room that belonged to my parents, it seemed and felt empty without my mom there. The smell of the room was old and not clean. I noticed that many of our belongings were missing. I saw that there was only one love seat, which I guess is used to sleep on, and no bed. There was no air conditioner, but one fan in the corner, and one mini refrigerator with no food in it, just one gallon of water. There were a few dishes on the counter and one big bowl used for washing dishes.

As I was standing in the middle of the room just staring, my dad walked in and gave me a big hug, and turned to my daughter and gave her one, too. I noticed that he had lost a lot of weight. What amazed me was that he was smoking. I’ve never seen him smoke in all my life. Other than that, it was nice seeing him, and I felt whole again.

At last, it felt like home again with my dad there, but it touched my heart how I really missed my mom. I just wished she was there. I guess it’s life, so much in life that we don’t understand. We just bow our heads and thank God every day for our loved ones. Rest in peace, Mom.

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## Frank Melissa and Steven Hiking up the Trail by Steven Horstmann

I was working for Beacon Group cleaning the Federal Building and the Federal Court house. When I got done cleaning the new court building I would go to the old building to meet my friends Frank and Melissa and try to not get caught talking. Some time we would hang out together when it was lunch time we would eat together and leave together to go to the new building to clock out then go to our cars and leave.

On the freeway I would try to keep up with Frank we would go 70 to 75 mph on a 65 speed limit road and not get caught by the highway police.

One time Melissa, Frank and I went to the Catalina Mountains to go hiking. We were walking about half way up the trail when we wanted to take a break because we were getting tired.

We took the walk during the summer. We already went more than half way. As we were walking, we saw a restroom so Frank, Melissa, and I knew that was our resting place. We finally got to sit down in some shade of a wall that was about three feet tall. Frank had a full back pack - it was stuffed with candy.

It was about noon so I asked Frank if we could have some of his snacks. He said "yes". He opened his back pack and let us have some.

I think about five minutes I was looking then I saw a small hill. It was about a stone throw away from us. I asked Frank and Melissa if they wanted to go with me. Frank said "no" but Melissa said "yes" so she and I went up the hill but Frank stayed down. When we got to the top of the hill we looked around for 5 minutes then we saw Frank just sitting there waiting for us to get down. We went down to Frank and we started our way back to our cars to go back home.....





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## An Open Letter to LVT Readers and the Arizona Theatre Company by Irene Corrola

Hello LVT Readers,

I want to take this opportunity to thank Arizona Theatre Company for giving LVT students and tutors an opportunity to go see a theater play at the Arizona Theatre Company. The play that my tutor and I saw was Daddy Long Legs. Tickets price start at \$36.00 but for us it was just \$10.00. **WOW!** Yes, you are reading this correctly just \$10.00.

This romantic story was about a young girl name Jerusha that was the oldest orphan at the John Grier Home. One day a man name Jervis Pendleton went to the orphanage and paid her way through college so she could become a great writer. The agreement was that he would pay for her schooling but she had to write him a letter every month letting him know how she was doing in school. She did not know his name so she called him Daddy Long Legs because she knew he was a tall man. Jerusha wrote John many letter for three years and letter after letter they fell in love.

My tutor and I had a very great time. We laughed, I cried and we laughed some more. It was a dream come true for me. It's been a very long time since I went to go see a play.

I usually don't have time for myself. I am always too busy working or doing things for my family. This story took a lot of stress off my shoulders. Yes, my tutor and I are planning to go see the next play in March called The Great Gadsby. We cant wait! Hope to see you there.

~ A Blurb About Me: My name is Irene, I been a LVT student for quite a while. Some of my hobbies are dancing, painting or looking at fine art. My favorite colors our black and pink. My favorite foods our Mexican and Italian. The thing I love to do most is waking up in the morning and seeing that my family is still with me. That to me is priceless.

P.S. on my favorite list I am adding that I like going to the theater.



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## *The Walk of Literacy*

*We take one step,  
then another and another,  
all with some dream in mind.  
It doesn't always seem like we are making much progress,  
but when we turn around  
we can see  
that we have journeyed far beyond where we once stood.*



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

Our goals are, as these authors have written:

- to share the gifts that have been given to us,
- to express our appreciation and understanding of others,
- to be careful with our pride,
- never to confuse Santa again,
- to exercise our imaginations and humor,
- to see ourselves and others with loving and objective eyes,
- to recognize problems and find solutions,
- to give our all and recall the glory,
- to honor our parents and their love for us,
- to aspire and work to achieve our dreams,
- to know, remember and share our heritage,
- to remember good times with friends, and
- to enjoy the sheer DRAMA of life!



►► Photos in this issue are from the Facebook pages of Literacy Connects and Tucson Festival of Books. ◄◄