

LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

STORIES, etc.

I am by Carmen Morales

Monsoon, rain, sun, Jasmine flowers
 I like pandas, furry cats, guineapigs.
 My family: Mom, Dad, my kids Jazmin, Anabel,
 Gabriel II,
 Alexis, my husband Gabriel, and my siblings are
 important to me.
 I find satisfaction in being home with my kids
 having a cook out.
 I can be angry when my home is mess.
 But, I still love being home all the time.
 I love learning and reading new things.
 I can be friendly when I meet new people because
 I'm not shy
 I have hurt feelings after I'm mad at my kids.
 This is me. I am.

~ Carmen leads a busy, full life as a wife, mother, full-time
 physical therapy technician, and an LVT student in group
 classes and individual tutoring sessions. We don't know
 how she does it, but she does!



LVT Student Ambassadors were there!



GOOD NEWS!

LVT tutors and volunteers gathered on May 5 to celebrate and learn more about each other and ways to help LVT. There were SNACKS, prizes donated by community organizations and give-aways from our partners at Reading Seed. The group also attempted to sing with some success.



Ho, ho, ho! Santa Claus stopped by LVT to tell his story! You can find it later in this issue.



Now, here's your gift under the tree: Students and tutors are giving the new *Reading Improvement Center* rave reviews. All tutor slots for this series are filled, but coordinator Steve Windsor says, "We would love to have more students any time." Talk to Steve, Edie or Susan F. to learn more about this exciting opportunity.



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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My Blessings by Martha Tobler

When I lived in El Paso, Texas, I enjoyed speaking Spanish. When I moved to Tucson, Arizona, I was surprised that hardly anyone I knew spoke Spanish. It was hard for me to understand English and I was embarrassed when people spoke to me.

A few months later, I met two good looking, Spanish-speaking guys who were missionaries from the Mormon Church. They invited me to go to their church. I said, "Yes," but the first thing that came to my mind was that people were going to talk to me in English and I could not answer back. But the missionaries told me, "Don't worry, we'll be there with you."

That first Sunday I was nervous, but I told myself, "You will be okay." We walked into the church and everybody welcomed me with open arms. I was glad that I went.

One Sunday I was sitting in the pew, ready for sacrament, when a tall, well dressed woman sat next to me. She asked me a question in English. I looked at her in confusion because I couldn't understand her. A person sitting next to me translated for me. This woman wanted me to meet her son! I said okay, but I was thinking that the son must be ugly, or something is wrong with him, for his mother to be looking for a girlfriend for him.

The next Sunday she sat next to me at church and asked me if I was ready to meet him. I said, "Okay," and she said, "We need to go outside. He is waiting for you."

She took me by the arm and led me outside, where I saw a man sitting in a car. When he saw us he opened the car door and came out. I was so nervous I felt like my heart was going to jump out of my body.

He came up and said "Hello." He was tall and slim and wearing a yellow shirt and a pair of black pants. He had the biggest brown eyes I had ever seen. His mother insisted that he take me home. He opened the car door and I got in and sat in silence, thinking to myself, "What am I going to say to him?" I just smiled the whole way home.

His mother called me the next day and insisted that we keep seeing each other. So we started going out to eat together. We became good friends after a few months and started making plans to get married. Five months later, we became husband and wife.



A year later, we welcomed a little girl. We named her Edna. She was seven weeks premature and she was so small, so beautiful and so innocent. I told myself what a precious gift I was allowed to have. She was everything I had wished for!

She grew to be a wonderful woman. When she left for the university and then got married, the house felt so empty and sad. After a few months she became pregnant and then had our first grandchild, Gabriella. We were so happy. Gabriella was a beautiful little girl and it was the most wonderful feeling since the day that Edna was born. I couldn't imagine feeling that way again.

But then, over the next four years, we were excited to welcome three more grandchildren: Tyler, a sweet little boy, Anthony, so handsome, and Isabella with the personality of a ballerina. We are so blessed! I never imagined, that day when I made the decision to move from El Paso to Tucson, that my life would become so rich and filled with joy and happiness!

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December in Las Vegas by Marty Calanche

In December of 1997, I had moved to Las Vegas to look for a job. I put applications in at casinos, food stores and at WalMart. I was staying in a motel on the east side of Border Highway when I got a phone call from WalMart to come in for an interview. I got the job and started, 2-1/2 weeks before Christmas, working in the furniture department.

One week before Christmas my new boss, Steven, told 7 of his employees, including me, to go to the office and wait for him there. None of us knew what was going on. I had trouble sitting still and my hands were getting sweaty. I was nervous, thinking that maybe some of us were being let go.

Steven finally came in with a big white box in his hands and a grin on his face. Lisa, who worked in the women's department, asked him, "Did you bring us some donuts?"

"No," he answered, "something more important."

I said, with a grin, "Is it a box full of envelopes with bonus checks?"

Steven ignored me and said sharply, "Listen up!" as he looked down at all of us. "I need someone to dress up in this." He shook the box.

"What is it?!" Mike yelled.

Steven opened the box and said, "Okay, we need one of you to put on this Santa Claus suit and walk around the store, talking to kids." We all started looking at one another as if we were saying, "You do it."

"Well? Who is going to step up? We'll give you a \$50 dollar check and let you keep the suit too!"

The office got really quiet as no one was speaking up. I could hear the clock on the wall ticking. Each second seemed like a minute. I looked up at Steven and then looked back at the silent faces. "Well," I thought, "the kids do need a Santa Claus."

I swung my head back around and yelled, "Yes Steven! I'll do it!" Then I continued, "This is going to be fun, and besides, the kids would like to talk to Santa and let him know what they are wishing for."

After work I tried on the suit and stood in front of a mirror. I looked up and down at myself and said out loud, "What have I got myself into now?"

The following Monday, driving to work in the Santa suit in my yellow Ford Torino, there were folks waving hello to me. I would wave back, hearing the jingle bells wrapped around my wrist.

I drove to the back of WalMart and snuck into the toy department. I stopped to talk to a little girl and her mom. The kid grabbed ahold of my coat and kept pulling down on it, asking if she could touch my beard. A minute later someone was tugging on my right pant leg. I turned to look: it was the same little girl! I looked back to my left and realized it was twins. I bent down and picked them both up and said, "Ho! Ho! Ho! I have four beautiful blue eyes staring at me and I can bet you both want the same thing. Ho! Ho! Ho!" I had many other kids on my first day, but Diana and Denise, the twins, I will never forget.

Fifteen years later, I still dress up as Santa at Christmas time. Even though I hesitated back in Las Vegas, I am so glad I did it because it's a real pleasure to see the happiness in the faces of the kids.

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Downtown **by Martina Roleke**

My family and I went downtown to the Fox Theater Saturday night to watch a dance performance that my granddaughter, Alex was in. They danced to Hip Hop and Rap music that was very noisy, but a lot of fun. I was dancing too, in the aisle, just like everybody on stage. The music didn't make any sense to me, but I was having a very good time for about three hours. When the dance was over, my husband, my daughter, my granddaughter Victoria and I went home.

After we left, Alex called me and said that she went to the parking garage to pick up her car but it was closed and she needed us to come back downtown for her. After I hung up the phone I was very worried and scared for her because I thought she was by herself. I said to my husband, "Hurry! Hurry! Alex is all alone!" Then I called her back to make sure that she was okay and she told me she was with her friends, she wasn't alone.

The next day, in the afternoon, we went back downtown to pick up her car. Then, since we were down there again, my husband and I decided to take a walk around the city and I took some pictures for my writing class. After we finished taking the pictures, we went to eat lunch and then we drove home.



My Ramada **by Martina Roleke**

I am a grand-mom who loves gardening, planting all kinds of bushes, trees and flowers. In the back of my house I have a big ramada and I have climbing plants on one side and, on the other side, I have planted grapes and passion fruit vines. There are a lot of baby grapes right now and the passion fruit is blooming, with big, red flowers hanging inside the ramada like red light bulbs. It is a very beautiful place to relax and hang out.

I have a hammock in the ramada and sometimes at night I lie on it. The hammock is a very nice, quiet place to relax and listen to all the wildlife. I hear coyotes talking or howling, and all the little insects singing their own songs. The different kinds of sounds are like music to my ears.

Sometimes I make believe I am camping very far away from home. The ramada is like jungle trees and the hammock is tied between two of them. My ramada, at night, in the darkness, is very magical.

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A Smoky Shadow by Charles Barlow

It was a cold and windy night at the University of Arizona where I was a custodian. I was starting my work in Old Chemistry on the third floor. I smelled smoke coming from the left, front stairway, but did not see smoke. I felt uneasy.

As I continued my work, I felt a sticky hot wind all around me. I cleaned the restrooms, removed the trash from each room, then dusted and wet-mopped the floor. At my 5 a.m. lunchtime, the sticky hot wind was still with me.

When it was time to sweep the stairways, I did the others first. Then I started on the smoky one. Everything was fine at first. But then, between the third and second floor, I saw the smoky form of an old western cavalryman coming down the stairway. My knees and hands were trembling in perfect rhythm. The rest of my body could not move as he approached me, and I felt the smoke getting more intense. Then he touched me, went through me, and I felt ash in my mouth as I heard, "Next time, step aside."

I RAN OUT OF THE BUILDING!



My Life by Angela Leyvas

I'm Angela, a single mother. I'm an independent, motivated, confident, passionate and caring person. I'm very outgoing and *starving* to get all I can out of life!

I have many hobbies. I like gardening because I find it very relaxing and it takes me to another place away from all the noise. I like Zumba dance to help keep me fit and in shape and I also find biking very refreshing. I enjoy reading good books.

I am working on going to school for a nursing degree and I'm determined not to give up. Working in the medical field would be rewarding for me because I can help people in their time of need. I will be as caring, understanding and compassionate with my patients as I am with my family and friends.

The best part about me is that I have a five-year-old son whose name is Santiago. He is the pride and joy of my life. Santiago is full of energy and he keeps me on my toes! I wish I had half the energy he has. He is a happy boy who makes friends with everybody he comes across.

Santiago is the main reason that I want a nursing career so much. I will be able to give him a better life and be a good role model. It will mean a brighter future for both of us.

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A Gypsy Childhood by Neva Cordova

My name is Neva Cordova. It means "the whiteness of snow." I was born in Denver, Colorado, where I lived until I was two. When my family moved to Phoenix, Arizona, it was a lot different and smaller than Denver. We lived in Phoenix for three years while my parents went to college. When I was five-years-old, my mother found a job in Tucson, Arizona, so once again we packed up and moved.

We moved six more times from my first grade until I was in high school, changing schools each time. Some people would say we were like gypsies traveling in a circus.

In order to have some stability in my childhood, I started to play the violin in the school band. I knew I could fit into any school I went to because having my violin in my hand made it easier for me to make friends. To this day I have a best friend that I met in, and have kept since, elementary school.

In the fifth grade I also started playing flag football in order to be friends with the boys and now I love watching football.

Because of all the moving around, I spent my childhood seeking stability and finding out my likes and dislikes. The talents I acquired have made me who I am. I know now that everything happens for a reason because I enjoyed my childhood and, if I had a chance to do it again, I would never change a thing.



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A Letter For My Ten-Year-Old Self by Warren Fayuant

Listen to every word Grandpa says. Enjoy those short trips to the store and how awesome it felt to be with him. Say you love him every day. Forgive yourself when he passes away. It was not your fault.

Tell your brother you're sorry for not being in his life completely. You always had other things to do. Kiss your sister and hold her hand when she follows you like a lost puppy. Don't be mean and tell her to go away. Kiss Mom and say - no matter what you and she went through in the past - "I love you still."

Be a friend to A.J. and when he gets hurt, believe him. He really got hurt.

Don't be jealous of your cousin William. Be a support when his father dies. Remind him of all the cool things his dad let you guys do; like drive the truck, ride the horse, and he gave you words of advice. Don't believe every word he might say while drunk.

Love your dog "Pup a G." Teach her how to stay. She will follow you all the way to Grandpa's house 10 miles away. Cry and be sad when she passes away, but let go.

Do your best in school, as best you can. Do not worry about your reading and spelling, you shine in other ways. Don't believe that you are dumb. Next year you will be placed in the gifted class.

Warren, please be a kid. One day you will become an adult with adult responsibilities like paying rent, doing your own laundry, cleaning your own apartment and work!! Be happy, live in the moment, and when someone asks you to join in a game of kickball, tag, or basketball, do it. Don't be so quiet. Get mad even if you are to blame. Everyone needs to vent.

Laugh with your cousins. In the end they will lift you up when things get too hard. Tell Amy you love her. She will be a huge support later on in life.

Most importantly, hold on, believe in yourself and trust your instincts. They will carry you a long way.

Love quickly, stay open, dream big and forgive easily.

March 17, 2012



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

Our goals are, as these authors have written:

- to listen to the poetry of our lives,
- to count our blessings,
- to share the gifts of our inner Santa Clauses,
- to dance when the music moves us,
- to dream – and make our own magic,
- to know when it's time to leave,
- to aspire and work to reach our dreams,
- to bloom where we're planted, and
- to live and learn – and forgive mistakes along the way.

