

# LITERACY VENTURES IN TUCSON

~ A magazine by and about LVT Students ~

## STORIES, etc.



### My Life Story by Mr. Toro

Hello, my name is Philbert Toro. I am a 29 year old Native American who comes from a tribe named Tohono O'odham. Our reservation is located 56 miles west of Tucson, Arizona. I was also born and raised on the reservation.

My biggest regret is that at the age of 14 years old I got involved with drug smuggling which landed me in prison for 3 years. Today I am in a half-way house and on probation for the next 3 years.

What I have set out to achieve for myself today is get a job as a mechanic because I enjoy working on cars and trucks. I would also like to go back to school and further my education. I would also like to find the woman of my dreams and marry her and live happily ever after till my dying days.

*Mr. Toro is a reading and writing student at LVT – and an artist! Recently he moved out of his half-way house and rejoined his family. Congratulations, Mr. Toro! Keep up the good work and keep working towards your goals.*



### Literacy Ventures needs your best stuff!

Find out how to submit your best stuff at <http://www.lovetoread.org/lvt-community/students/literacy-ventures>. Please remember to send everything in one email and ensure you have permission to use other people's names and personal details.



## GOOD NEWS!



This is what Soleng Tom school ELAA students said when they discussed their reasons for learning to speak English and the ways that their new skills help them live better lives:

- I can communicate with everybody.
- I can help my daughter with her homework.
- You need to speak the language of the country where you live.
- I would like to volunteer to help in my child's school.
- I work in my restaurant, and my customers speak English.
- I can advise my daughter when she has problems, so we become closer.

Clearly **Carmen Gorzee, Julissa Serra, Glenda Tello, Jaqueline Valenzuela, Antonio Sierra, Ilva Sierra, Michelle Montes de Oca, Yan Zhang, Kelly Wang, Joseph Megally, Engy Hana, Rasha Hanna, and Insook Youn** are dedicated learners, parents and community members. Thanks to tutor **Patricia Stewart** for sharing this good news!



Did you go to the Tucson Festival of Books, too?



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## Anita's Miracle Journey

by Anita Mattison

On January 25, 1995, I was 15 years old and I had just walked into St. James Hospital in Hornell, New York to deliver my baby girl. Dena Anne was born at 5:34 p.m. She weighed 8 lbs. 11 ½ oz. and was 22 inches long. After holding Dena Anne for a few minutes they took her to the nursery. The next morning they brought her right to me. She was beautiful and I stared at her and was amazed that she came from me. That afternoon Willie, the baby's father came to take Dena Anne and me home. Everything went smoothly until January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1995. Early that morning Dena Anne woke for a bottle and as Willie went to get it I suffered a brain injury. Willie called an ambulance and my mother. I was taken by ambulance to Hornell Hospital and then by helicopter to Rochester, NY. As my family was driving to Rochester they saw the helicopter carrying me overhead and my mother said, "There's Anita."

It took a long time for the doctors to find out what was going on with me. Finally the doctor took my parents to his office and said, "Miss Mattison has a brain hemorrhage and the blood in her brain needs to be drained. Her condition is very serious and if she were older she would not have survived." Hours and hours went by and the doctors were having tests done on me for everything possible that I could have. After 24 hours they found I had an AVM and possibly an aneurysm. I laid in a coma in ICU. My head was shaved and there was a tube in the left side taking out the blood. Day after day my mother stayed by my side at the hospital. Some people gave me angel pins and my mother pinned them on the pillow around my head. She felt they were watching over me. Two and a half weeks later after the blood had finished draining the doctor gave me an injection which put me in a semi-coma. A week later I was in an elevator. Just then I opened my eyes but I didn't say anything. There was a nurse and an orderly talking. I was taken back to my room and Willie and my mother came in. I tried to talk, but it was difficult for me to speak. Everyone was so happy that I pulled through. It took me a long time though to come completely out of the coma. The doctor wanted me to go to St. Mary's Hospital for rehabilitation. Before I was transferred there Willie's parents brought Dena Anne to see me. I held my daughter and it felt so great!

At St. Mary's I got physical, cognitive and speech therapy. I was there for a month. Every day I went to classes. Then I was starting to walk more. My therapist and I walked around the hospital inside and outside. I also was able to take showers on my own. I wanted to have Dena Anne come and stay with me at the hospital so that weekend Willie's mother brought her. The hospital had a family room that we were able to stay in. The next morning I took Dena Anne around to show her to the staff and patients. I was so proud of my daughter.

The next weekend I was able to go home to my mother's and Willie's mother brought Dena Anne over. On Saturday my mother took Dena Anne and me to my grandmother's house. There were five generations of our family there and they were so happy to see me. We took a lot of pictures. The next week with all my therapy I was doing great!! I felt like I was getting back to normal. On Friday my doctor came in to see me and wish me good luck. It seemed great to walk into my bedroom and have all my things together. My mother called and said I had an appointment in Buffalo, New York with Dr. Hopkins at the Millard Fillmore Hospital on Monday. Dena Anne was now almost two months old. I spent hours holding her.

Dr. Hopkins told me I could go home and everything would be o.k. for awhile, but if I had another baby I would not survive. Or I could have operations to make certain what I had and try to fix it. He said if I did this it would be my 'Miracle Journey'." My mother decided I should have the operations. The doctor explained what would happen during the surgery. He said they would be looking for big fat veins knotted up. The surgery would last three hours and was called a craniotomy. The day of the surgery everybody followed me as I was taken downstairs to the operating room. My mother said, "I love you Anita and I'll see you when you get out." After the surgery Dr. Hopkins told my mother that I did not have an aneurism and knew that it was definitely an AVM. He said I needed several surgeries called embolizations where I would have to be awake.

A few days later I turned 16. Over the last year I had gone through a lot, but my main concern had always been Dena Anne. Because I had been in the hospital, sometimes I would not be sure where I was and was worried if

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Dena Anne was not in the room. I always checked to see if she was o.k. During that week I took Dena Anne to get her first shots.

A week later I was back in Buffalo for the first embolization surgery. This time it was not so difficult. They had a room ready for me, so I got right in. When they took me in the operating room there were seven tv monitors. They had to find a good vein in my groin and put a needle in the vein to send a scan to my brain. Once it was there it scoped the area. The doctor would ask "how is it feeling?" At that moment I would feel a burning sensation on my brain. I had 10 to 20 of those sensations during that operation. I was in the hospital three days. I had four more of these surgeries and was able to go home for about 2 weeks between surgeries. My mother said that they were going to the Ronald McDonald House so I could rest. Early the next day the nurse came in to take my blood pressure and said the doctor would be in to see me before the surgery. My mother and the rest of my family came in to see how I was feeling and to tell me they would see me after the surgery. Dr. Hopkins came in and said, "All right Anita we're ready to go." They took me in the operating room and I was put on the operating table where there were seven t.v. monitors. I kept moving my arms and head which made it necessary for them to put restraints on me. They had to find a good vein in my groin and put a needle in the vein to send a scan to my brain. Once it was there it scoped the area. The doctor would ask "how is it feeling?" At that moment I would feel a burning sensation on my brain. Tears would run. I had 10 to 20 of those sensations during that operation. I was in the hospital for three days and was able to go home between surgeries. I had four more which were the same.

Now because of having the five operations I have no feeling on my right side and I am blind on the right side of both eyes. It is difficult for me to put sight with feeling. While the surgeries corrected my brain so that I probably will not have another AVM many other aspects are worse.

I had to go back to the hospital in Buffalo for the last surgery which was a crown radial surgery. They put a crown on my head This was done by putting screws in my skull. The crown directed the radiation. They took me into a room and laid me on a table in the center of the room. Then they sent radiation to the focal point in my brain. This took three hours. Later the doctor came in and took the crown off. It was good to have the pressure off. The next day I went home.

Things were difficult with Willie's family so Willie, Dena Anne and I got a nice apartment. It was wonderful. Willie and I lived in this apartment with Dena Anne for about a year. I continued to have a difficult time because my right side was completely numb. I also walked with a limp. Willie and I were not getting along so finally Dena Anne and I found a really nice two-story apartment next door to my mother. I took Dena Anne places and did things with her. I made sure she got all of her shots and went to her doctor's appointments. I had Dena Anne until she was 5 years 9 months old. Then Willie took Dena Anne from me. I tried to get her back. Months became years and I was not successful.

I couldn't see Dena Anne so I left New York to try to better myself. I took a bus and rode for four days - then I was in Tucson, AZ and found a house to rent. It was so hot in Tucson compared to Hornell, New York. After about a year I went to see my primary care doctor. I told her that I needed help with my side. She was able to refer me to Carondelet Health South. After months went by, my right arm and leg were getting better. They also hooked me to a walking machine to improve my walk. When I was finished with all my physical therapy, I decided to go to the Literacy Connection because I had heard about it from a friend. They called me in to take some tests and I told them what happened to me. Then they put me on a waiting list for a tutor. While I was waiting I went to group classes there. About a month later I got a phone call from Mona, my new tutor. I made an appointment for Thursdays at the Martha Cooper Library right down the street from my house. Almost a year has gone by and I'm reading and writing more. With Mona's help I have written this story which to me is the first leg of my Miracle Journey. Thank you Mona!

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## Medicine Man by Charles Barlow

Sorrock will be the next medicine man, but first he must grow up. There are those who would like to kill him before he becomes the next medicine man. This is the last twenty years of the current medicine man's life. If he fails to train Sorrock, then the organization of the Forceful Hand will ruin our earth by polluting our air, water and ground for profit. Our world would slowly die.

Forceful Hand is trying to kill Sorrock, but each time the Medicine Man stops them by using the elements and his healing ways. Sorrock is now twenty one, and it is time for him to start his training and to fulfill his destiny as the next medicine man.

His mother says, "Sorrock, it is time for you to see Medicine Man. He will teach you all his skills and about the elements that he uses." Sorrock knows he is chosen to be the next medicine man. As Sorrock comes out of his house, he sees a life form coming toward him. A man approaches. It's Medicine Man; "Well boy, are you ready to learn?"

The first thing Medicine Man teaches Sorrock is how to read the minds of all life forms. Medicine Man says, "Listen boy, for you to hear the minds of all, the first step is to open your mind and throw out all that you think you know. That way, you will hear what each mind needs from you. If you learn that, then I will teach you how to use the elements, and then you will know all my skills. It will take you at least thirteen and a half years. I hope you will finish what you start, boy."

Sorrock replies, "I will finish. I believe it will not take that long for me, sir."

Medicine Man scolds, "Listen, boy, this is not like running up a hill."

Sorrock boasts, "You know nothing about me or how easy it is for me to learn things, sir."

Medicine Man challenges, "OK boy, if you can read my mind, I will teach you the element of air. But if you fail, come back when you are truly willing to learn."

Sorrock tries but fails.

He begs, "Please give me another chance."

Medicine Man grudgingly agrees, "OK, boy, open your mind and throw out all that false confidence of yours, and then we'll start your training."

With a puzzled look, Sorrock asks, "How do I open my mind, sir?"

Medicine Man explains, "First learn to control your mind; through meditation and concentration. Think of a room to store all your thoughts; then close that room's door and open a new door."

Sorrock wonders, "How long will that process take, sir?"

"OK," says Medicine Man. "The first thing is to concentrate on one place. Then put away all your fears and start to believe in yourself. That will lead you to meditate."

Sorrock stood facing the wall and concentrated for eleven hours. He began to feel at peace with himself.

Medicine Man says, "Well, I see you are now ready to meditate, boy. Through meditation, you will have peace within your heart, body and mind. You will increase all your abilities as a medicine man. It is now time for you to read my mind."

Sorrock nods. "OK, I see you coming to save my life time after time."

Medicine Man smiles. "Well then, boy, you have learned to read the mind sooner than I did. It took me three weeks to learn to read the last medicine man's mind. Now you are ready to learn to control the air element by

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using your mind. Start by going to the Mountain of Screaming Souls. Change the temperature of air. Make it too hot to burn or too cold to freeze, or cause friction to make lightning. Next, control the force of air, making it soft to blow a paper, hard to blow down a building, or great enough to change the land forever. You will be able to shape the air into little rocks or a big wall. Whatever you create, you can force it to be as thin as a small stone or thick as a ten foot mountain wall. Regulate the speed of air to be as slow as a turtle or as fast as a deer. Change the direction of the air, as well. The best part is when you build the air elemental totem and summon the creature to its new home, where the creature is safe from harm.”

It took Sorrock two weeks to master the air element.

Medicine Man rejoices, “Boy, you do learn faster than I hoped. It’s time for you to learn how to control the earth element. Start by going to the Cave of the Lost Souls. Go to the center of the moving earth where you start shaping the earth to be as small as a marble or as big as a house. You can control the earth’s crust to be as thin as paper or as thick as a brick. Open, close, or move the earth at will. Transform the base elements into gold and create friction with the earth to form precious gemstones. Finally, build the earth elemental totem and summon the creature to its new home, where the creature is safe from harm.”

It took Sorrock two weeks to master the earth element.

Medicine Man was overwhelmed. “Boy, I am amazed how quickly you learn each element \_how can this be? It’s time for you to learn the water element. Go to the Pool of Mother Nature. There you will learn all about water. Scoop up just a drop of water then shape it to be as small as bubble or as big as a tidal wave. Make it rain or snow, or stop the rain or snow. Transform the water to be sweet, sour, or salty. Control its speed to be as slow as a snail or as fast as a charging bull. Make the water feel as soft as a tissue or as hard as a rock. Finally build the water elemental totem and summon the creature to its new home, where the creature is safe from harm.”

It took Sorrock two weeks to learn this.

Medicine Man exclaims, “You are truly gifted! No other medicine man has learned as fast as you have. The last element is fire. Go to the Ancient Pool of the Never Ending Flames of Life. The flames will not hurt you because you know the other three elements. As you enter, you will be greeted by all the other medicine men that came before you. Each one will teach you one thing that they used the most.”

As Sorrock enters, he sees the First Medicine Man. He demonstrates and explains to Sorrock how to tell the future. “Take a basket of water into the tent where you will start a fire. Smoke some herbs from this ancient Indian pipe sit down and throw some water onto the fire. Close your eyes to see the future.” Then he fades away.

The Second Medicine Man shows Sorrock various ritual dances to promote crop growth and hunting and control spiritual forces. Then he gives Sorrock the small hand drums and the traditional head piece. “As you think of the ritual you need your clothing will change to the ritual you are doing.” then he fades away.

The Third Medicine Man demonstrates how to use the spiritual healing gloves. “Call on nature to give you the power to heal. When you see the gloves turn green, you are ready to heal.” He gives the spiritual healing gloves to Sorrock and then fades away.

The Fourth Medicine Man explains how to use the soul arrows to contact the spirit world for knowledge. “Know this: The spirit world will always want something in return for its knowledge.” He gives Sorrock the spirit bow and soul arrows and then fades away.

The Fifth Medicine Man shows Sorrock nature’s how to control. “Start by using this cloak of nature, raise your arms, then close your eyes and think what of you need nature to do.” He gives the cloak of nature to Sorrock and fades away.

The Sixth Medicine Man teaches about herbalism. “Using these boots, form a circle in the area of earth, imagine the herbs you need. The next day, the herbs will be waiting for you. Wave your hand and the herbs will make the medicine you need,” he gives Sorrock the boots and then fades away.

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The Seventh Medicine Man shows Sorrock how," to use the right bracelet of magic and the left bracelet of sorcery. The Magic bracelet makes items like boots for speed, silence and jumping, as well as Protection Spells like, fire, water, earth, air and spirits. The Sorcery bracelet it cast curses or removes like, losing vision or hearing, strains, viruses, and even death. Both bracelets working together improve health body and slow aging." He gives Sorrock the bracelets and then fades away.

After the seven lessons, Sorrock starts using the fire element. He Create a fire as small as a campfire, big enough to destroy a town or great enough to burn acres. He moves it as slowly as a snail crawls or as fast as a bird flies. Then he summons the fire elemental creature and gives it a new home where the creature is safe from harm.

As Sorrock leaves the Ancient Pool of Never Ending Flames of Life he sees Medicine Man bowing to him. The Medicine Man then praises him, "Well done, my son." In the final lesson, he shows how to perform psychic healing surgery. "Hold that wolf tail in one hand. Then envision your other hand sending healing energy to repair the area." He gives the wolf tail to Sorrock hugs him, and then steps into the Never Ending Flames. His body turns into ash. His soul looks back at Sorrock, nods and fades away.



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

*Our goals are, as these authors have written:*

- *to work toward our greatest dreams,*
- *to follow our Miracle Journeys,*
- *and imagine all great and wonderful possibilities.*

