

Your ARC newsletter by and for ESL, multicultural, international students, Californians, and, well, anybody really...



The Parrot



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Inside This
Issue

From Fiji to ARC: Shelvina Singh Connecting Cultures & Languages

Shelvina Singh, Student Support Specialist in the People, Culture & Society Homebase, has lived in the U.S. for 17 years. She was born in Fiji and spoke English from early childhood, while her parents spoke a unique form of Hindi – an adapted dialect created by generations of Fijians during British colonization. Although she already spoke English before moving, she was placed in an ESL class when she started elementary school in the U.S. With a bachelor's in psychology from San Francisco State University and a master's in industrial-organizational psychology from Golden Gate University, Shelvina now supports students who, like her, once felt caught between languages.



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The United States Should Continue to Support Ukraine

Olena Kurus - ESL 325

If you learn about injustice, whose side will you take, good or evil? If you see how the strong unfairly offend the weak, whose side will you take? People very often face such a question. Unfortunately, world history can tell a lot about injustice and at the same time, fortunately, we also know about the victory of good over evil. For example, it is known that one day the dictator Adolf Hitler decided to conquer the whole world, and we know this event as the Second World War. This madness and devilish ambitions took millions of inno-

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Scattered Pebbles

Neelam Hakimi - ESL 325

Sometimes we embrace death to escape death. We often fall in hell searching for heaven. The Afghan government collapse in 2021 was unanticipated for Afghan people. The country was handed over to the Taliban once again. People had undergone considerable trials under the Taliban government two decades ago. Everyone was worried about his life, family, and job. The lives



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How to sign up for ESL Assessment

1. Scan the QR code below with your phone, or click on English as a Second Language (ESL) Assessment if you are on a computer.
2. Read all the information, and then scroll to the bottom of the page to choose if you want an in-person or an online ESL Assessment session.
3. After you choose in-person or online, sign up using your student ID number and birth date.



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My High School Graduation

High school graduation is a very special day for everyone. It is the time we finish our studies and celebrate our hard work. On this day, we feel happy and proud. We also thank our teachers, friends, and families for helping and supporting us. Graduation from high school is not the end, it is the start of a new life. I want to tell you guys about my graduation party.

My graduation celebration from high school was in 2015 in Kabul, Afghanistan. I graduated from a very good and famous high school called Rabia Balkhi. At that time, I was only 17 years old. About two weeks after my graduation, my parents planned a nice party for me. They invited our friends and relatives. I was very happy and excited for my party day.

Before the party, my mom and I went shopping for my graduation party. My mom bought me a very beautiful dress with red flowers. After that, we bought the decoration items like balloons, confetti, and candles. After that my dad had ordered a very big and delicious cake for the party and we sent invitations cards to our close relatives and friends. After that my cousin and I went to the beauty salon to get ready for the party.

During the party my family and I went to the hall before the guests arrived. I took some

really nice pictures with my family. My cousin and I wore matching dresses and all my cousins danced together. After dancing we had dinner and we served the cake with tea to the guests. I received many beautiful gifts like clothes, make-up, and a special necklace from my dad. Everyone enjoyed the party as much as they could.



After the party ended, we said goodbye to the guests. Everyone went to their homes and we started cleaning up the hall. After we finished cleaning the hall we got our stuff and went home. When I got home I was so tired. First I started checking out my gifts; they gave me a lot of beautiful gifts. And I felt so good and special.

In conclusion, my high school graduation was a day I will never forget. It was a time of joy, celebration, and thankfulness. I felt so lucky to have my family and friends with me to share this special moment with them. The party was a wonderful way to celebrate all the hard work I put into my studies. I loved the beautiful dress, the delicious cake, and all the fun we had together. Graduation from high school was the beginning of a new chapter in my life.

Bibi Habibi - ESL 47
Narrative Essay

My Favorite Food

Vareniki

I come from Ukraine, and one of my favorite dishes from there is vareniki. Vareniki are traditional Ukrainian dumplings. Vareniki is a universal and simple dish, but very delicious. They are not expensive. Vareniki are prepared from a dough based on milk, kefir or even just water and a variety of fillings. Fillings are most often made from meat, cabbage, potatoes with fried onions, cottage cheese or any kind of berries. They are boiled or steamed. As a rule, vareniki with a salty filling are boiled, and vareniki with a sweet filling are steamed. They are a small size, about half the size of a palm, crescent shaped and smooth on top. Vareniki has a soft, delicate, lightly elastic texture and a delicate creamy smell. They can be served as a main dish or as a dessert. One



time, I went to visit my future husband's mother in a village, and she made vareniki. I was very glad because I really like them, but they appeared to be filled with salty cottage cheese which I never tried

before and never even heard about because vareniki are mostly made with sweet cottage cheese. I really didn't like this filling, although it is my husband's favorite. My favorite vareniki are filled with fresh cherries or strawberries. I love eating them with sour cream and sugar. When I eat vareniki with strawberries, I remember my childhood, my home, the kitchen table where I ate them, and my mother near me. They give a feeling of home and comfort. Even after moving to live in another country, I don't stop cooking my favorite and delicious vareniki and remembering my home.

Viktoriia Sobenko - ESL 47
Opinion Paragraph

Spaghetti

Spaghetti is my favorite food from my childhood. It is not my native dish. It's more like a traditional Italian food. But my mother often cooked it with meat, vegetables, and tomato paste. My sister and I cooked it with cheese. However, the best dish was my father's spaghetti with eggs and sugar. Maybe it sounds strange, but for me, it was both a main dish and dessert. Once, when I lived in St. Petersburg, Russia, my husband invited me to our favorite Italian restaurant. I ordered pasta Carbonara. It's popular in the world and is made with spaghetti and sauce based on eggs, Parmesan cheese, and black pepper. The sauce becomes creamy when mixed with the hot spaghetti.



I love this type of spaghetti dish and often prepare it at home for my family, but I make it with cream instead of eggs because my son doesn't like eggs. Spaghetti has different forms and colors because it is made from many kinds of flour. Usually it's

long, thin, bland, and soft after preparation. Spaghetti is plain, but sauce, herbs, and oils make it flavorful. You can eat this dish at any time of the day. It may be breakfast, lunch, or dinner, and it can be an independent dish or used as a side dish. Spaghetti is cheap, you can find it in any store, it is easy to cook, and you

can make it at home by yourself. Indeed, spaghetti is still my favorite food, and I often prepare it for my family these days.

Natalia Zababurina - ESL 47
Opinion Paragraph

Tips to Save Money

If you want to save money and not cry every time you check your bank account, follow these simple tips. First, never go to the supermarket hungry. Make a shopping list before you go to the store, and stick to it like your life depends on it. For example, if you wrote down “milk”, don’t suddenly decide you need a whole chocolate cake to go with it. Next, ask yourself, “Do I need this, or do I just want it?” If the answer is the latter option, put it back and walk away. Then don’t have kids, seriously they are adorable, but they will drain your wallet really fast. Learn to cook; eating out is expensive, and your culinary experiments will make sure no one else wants to dine with you, saving you even more money! Finally, follow Dave Ramsey’s steps to financial freedom. In conclusion, if you save wisely, you will have peace of mind, and the best part is that you will enjoy spending money when you do!

Georgina Garcia - ESL 47
Opinion Paragraph

Dream Jobs

In the world, there are a lot of interesting and beautiful jobs. Interesting jobs for me are a pilot and a lawyer, but my dream job is an interpreter. A pilot is a very interesting job because you can see a lot of countries. This job has responsibility because a pilot is responsible for many people on the airplane. Lawyers are very smart people. They need to know many laws. They help many people. I want to be an interpreter. I love to help and speak with different people. I can work online or in an office. This job is not easy for me because I need to improve my English. To find my dream job is very important for me. It will make my life happy.

Yana Chepelieva - ESL 37
Opinion Paragraph

My Places of Joy

What place makes you feel really happy and calm? Everyone has their own special spots for different reasons. These places usually remind us of good times and feelings. For me, three places bring me special joy: my mom's kitchen, Golden Gate Park, and my fitness gym.

First, my mom's kitchen is the heart of our house, and it always makes me happy. I love the smell of her cooking, especially when she cooks *Qabuli palaw*; it's so comforting. I also learned how to cook many things with her in that kitchen. When I was fifteen years old, I remember for the first time my mom taught me how to cook rice with meat for lunch. I always watched her cooking and tried to assist her in cooking. I always have good talks and share the stories with my family at the kitchen table. Being there makes me feel warm and loved. Therefore, my mom's kitchen is a happy and peaceful place for me.

Next, Golden Gate Park is my favorite place to be outside. It's big and beautiful and located in the heart of San Francisco city, California, and it's easy to get to. The park has beautiful gardens and small lakes. I love walking and relaxing there. Sometimes I bring a book and read under a tree. The rose garden is especially pretty and smells amazing. I remember the first time I went to this park with my friends, I was surprised and felt like I was in paradise. Because

of its beauty and calm, Golden Gate Park makes me feel happy and relaxed when I'm there.

Last, my gym helps me feel strong and proud. It has a friendly environment and I have made friends who exercise at the same time. I work out there regularly. Working out helps me feel less stressed and keeps me healthy. It's my stress relief. For instance, after a boring day 1 hour's light exercise and taking warm shower make me feel energized. The gym is not just a building where I exercise; it's a place where I learn discipline and self-confidence. Last month, I lifted heavier weights that ever before! Going to the gym makes me feel

strong and confident. When I finish a workout, I feel good and proud. Therefore, my gym is a happy place because it makes me feel strong and healthy.

In conclusion, my mom's kitchen, Golden Gate Park, and my gym all make me happy in different ways and remind me of love, comfort and peace. I hope everyone can find their own special places that bring the joy, because happiness isn't just a feeling; it's a location we carry within us.

Ahmad Shekib Salamzai - ESL 47
Narrative Essay



My Special Eid

Eid is a very happy time for Muslims. It is a special holiday after Ramadan, which is a month of fasting. On Eid, families and friends come together. They eat good food, wear new clothes, and give gifts to children. In 2022, Eid was very special for me because I celebrated it in Afghanistan with my family. Being with my family made me very happy, and I will always remember this Eid.

Before Eid, my wife and I fasted for a whole month. We wanted to celebrate with our family, so we traveled to Afghanistan with our children. When we arrived, we stayed at my parents' house. Everyone was excited to see us because we had not been together for a long time. We started preparing for Eid together. My brothers and sisters cleaned and decorated the house. My father and I went to Kabul Bazaar to buy new clothes for everyone. My mother cooked delicious traditional food and sweets for the celebration. The house smelled very nice, and we were all excited for Eid.

On Eid morning, we woke up early and wore our new clothes. Then, we went to the Masjid for the Eid prayer. Many people were there, and everyone was happy. After the

prayer, we said "Eid Mubarak" to each other and gave hugs. Then, we went home and ate delicious food. We talked, laughed, and enjoyed our time together. One of the best parts of Eid is giving "Eidi" to children. We gave them money and small gifts, and they were very happy. Later, we visited our relatives and spent time with them. The children played with their cousins and had a lot of fun.

After a few days, it was time to say goodbye to our family and travel back home. We felt a little sad because we love our family and had a great time with them. But we were also happy because we made wonderful memories. Eid was very special for us.

In conclusion, Eid in 2022 was a very happy and special time for me. I celebrated with my family in Afghanistan, and we had a great time together. Eid is not just about food and gifts. It is about love, family, and happiness. I will always remember this Eid because it was one of the best times of my life.

Fakhruddin Rahimi - ESL 47
Narrative Essay



Biryani, Please!

In my country *biryani* is really a popular food. The taste is really good. My family and I really like this food. Most people like spicy *biryani*.



This delicious food is made from rice and chicken meat. When I was 10 years old I went to

my grandmother's home. She made *biryani* for us. It was really delicious for me.

After that, every weekend my grandmother made *biryani* because her children like it. And also, this flavorful food is very popular in Pakistan and India. It is interesting that one food in three different countries is called the same. I remember, one time when we were in Pakistan, my family and I went to the restaurant, we ordered *biryani* for us. This *biryani* was made from hot spice. Ohh, this is really interesting, because we ate water more than *biryani*. The spice was a lot. I believe most people in my country like *biryani*. For example, when I was in my home country, when I was inviting my siblings, they said, "please cook *biryani* for us."

In summary, I think *biryani* is really a popular food in some countries in Asia.

Ahdia Karimi - ESL 47
Opinion Paragraph

My Favorite Dish: Ukrainian Borsch



I am from Ukraine, and my country has a really diverse cuisine, but my favorite dish is most definitely *borsch* (soup). This dish is very important

for many families in Ukraine because it is a traditional food. As an example, I remember when I was a little girl, I would often come to visit my grandmother, and she would treat me with a delicious *borsch*. Many years have passed, and I have tried more than one *borsch* after that, but that one will always be the tastiest for me. Vegetables such as beets, carrots, potatoes, and cabbage are the main ingredients of this soup. But some people also add meat to it for a richer flavor. *Borsch* is a soup with a chunky texture, a salty taste, a red color, and it is usually served warm in soup bowls. In order to prepare it, first we need to make a meat broth, after which we add

chopped vegetables to it. After it is almost ready, we add some seasoning that we like. I usually eat *borsch* for dinner, but sometimes I have it for lunch as well. Also, *borsch* is one of the main dishes that must be on the dinner table when Ukrainians welcome guests from other countries. In every region of my home country, there are a few unique secret details of cooking *borsch*. In my opinion, this makes a dish even tastier with different mysterious tastes. However, the main secret of preparing *borsch* always stays the same for everyone. It is love with inspiration. People in my country eat it very often, and some of them eat it almost every day. So, it is not an expensive dish to make at all. *Borsch* is usually served with a piece of black bread, salo (another traditional Ukrainian food item), sour cream, and garlic, which add nice flavors to the main dish. Indeed, I like *borsch* very much, and I am sure it is the best dish in Ukrainian cuisine.

Maryna Rykova - ESL 47
Opinion Paragraph

Wow! Wow! *Kabuli Pulao!*



Kabuli pulao is a delicious food especially with dry lamb. *Kabuli pulao* is one of the traditional and very famous dishes in Afghanistan. All Afghan people love this food, and we always make it at home. It has a delicious taste and smell. Afghan people make this dish at wedding parties and birthday parties. We cook it with

fresh beef and lamb. If you cook with dry lamb, the taste will be double. We cook it together with rice, carrot, raisin, and meat. We also add some other ingredients like cardamom, turmeric, cumin, clove, cinnamon, salt, and sugar. People always make it

for lunch or dinner. It is an expensive food, and it requires more time to cook. It is a complete dish, and I love it. We always cook *Kabuli pulao* with dry lamb in the winter. Once, when I was 14 years old, my mother made *Kabuli pulao* with dry lamb, and it was very delicious. During the winter season, she cooked it on coal for a long time. Never travel to Afghanistan without trying *Kabuli pulao*, as this dish represents the identity of the Afghan people. This food requires great skill, and Afghans prepare it with love and experience. If you try it once, you will always love *Kabuli pulao*. It is a dish cooked by Afghan mothers, and you can feel the love in every bite. Every bite of *Kabuli pulao* carries the taste of Afghanistan history and culture. Indeed, it is a special dish with dry lamb, and all Afghan people love *Kabuli pulao*.

Sheenkai Ahadi - ESL 47
Opinion Paragraph

The Town of Borscht



In my home country, Ukraine, there is a national dish, and it is red *borscht*. In Ukraine, this dish is prepared in every home, and every Ukrainian woman knows how to make it. Once, when I was a teenager, I first tried to make this dish. My dog ate my first

borscht. It is cooked from meat, potatoes, cab-

bage, beets, beans, carrots, onions, garlic, and served with a spoonful of sour cream. The taste of this dish is always different recipe. *Borscht* has a delicious smell and a rich red color. It is eaten in the morning, at lunch and in the evening. It all depends on the person's appetite. The most expensive ingredient in this dish is the meat. Anyone who tries this dish will really enjoy it. The small town Borshchiv in the Ternopil region of Ukraine was named after Ukrainian *borscht*. Every fall there is a festival called "ate borscht". Indeed, red *borscht* is best dish in Ukraine.

Olha Lampika - ESL 47
Opinion Paragraph



The Grateful Gull: Robo Vac and More!



What are you grateful for? I have many blessing in my life, and I am really grateful for a few things: my home, my robot vacuum, and my ability to embroider. These special things makes me happy.

First of all, having a comfortable home is one of the greatest blessings in my life. I am deeply grateful for the warmth and security it provides, making it a true sanctuary for me and my family. Every corner of my home is designed to offer comfort, from the cozy living room to the peaceful bedroom. I appreciate how each room reflects my style. The convenience of modern appliances makes daily life easier and more enjoyable. I am thankful for the quiet space where I can relax after a long day. My home also serves as a gathering place for loved ones, where we can share laughter. The peaceful surroundings help me feel grounded and connected to what truly matters. It's incredible how a home can bring such a sense of belonging and contentment. For all these reasons, I am really thankful for my comfortable house.

Second, having a robot vacuum has truly changed my life for the better. I am incredibly grateful for my robot vacuum cleaner, as it makes cleaning my home so much easier. Unlike traditional vacuums, this little device works automatically, saving me time and energy. I simply set it to clean, and it goes around the house. It picks up dirt and pet hair without any effort from me. It can navigate around furniture, making it even more convenient. I love how I can continue my day while it quietly does the work. It also helps me consistently maintain a cleaner home. The robot vacuum is a huge relief for someone like me. I am busy, so I don't have time to clean. It is amazing how technology has made everyday chores so much simpler for all these reasons. I am really thankful for my robot vacuum cleaner, which has significantly improved my daily routine.

Last of all, embroidery has become more

than just a hobby for me. It is a true blessing in my life. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to craft beautiful Ukrainian symbols on T-shirts using my embroidery machine. This art form allows me to connect with my heritage. This is how I express my



love for Ukrainian culture. Each stitch I make carries a piece of history. It fills me with pride to share these symbols with others. It's amazing how such a simple hobby can bring so much joy and allow me to preserve and promote Ukrainian traditions. The embroidery machine makes the process faster and more precise, allowing me to bring intricate designs to life with ease. I find peace and joy in each project. The satisfaction of seeing the finished product, knowing I've created something meaningful, is unmatched. I feel blessed to be able to use my skills to bring beauty and culture together in this way. I am really blessed to have the hobby of embroidering Ukrainian symbols on T-shirts using my embroidery machine.

Indeed, my home, my robot vacuum, and my ability to embroider make me really happy. I feel very blessed in my life for all I have. Be grateful for every day and for all that surrounds you!

Oksana Hrytsuk - ESL 47
Opinion Essay

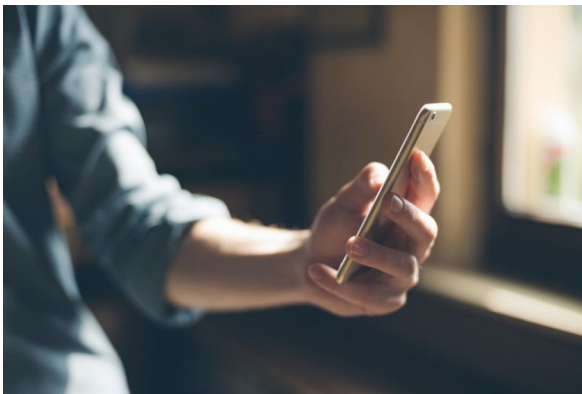


The Grateful Gull: I Can See!



What are you grateful for? There are things that make my life easier and joyful. I feel grateful for my cell phone, my church, and my ability to see.

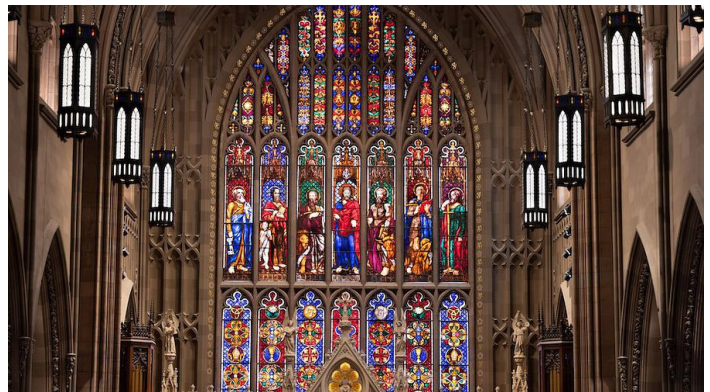
First of all, I am grateful for my cell phone because it is very important to me. My life has become better thanks to the phone. For example, I can call my family and find out how they are doing. I am very glad that I can call my parents. They live very far away, and I can't see them often. I can use navigation, and it saves my time. I can also use my phone to do homework. I like taking photos of my daughter and remembering these moments. For instance, I once took a picture of my daughter while she was eating ice cream and her face was dirty, but she looked so happy. This photo helps



me remember how much joy and curiosity she felt at that moment. I can watch videos on my phone. I am grateful for my phone because I can call my friends, and I speak to them. My cell phone helps me master new technologies. Indeed, I am very happy that I have a phone because I can't imagine my life without it.

Second, I am thankful for my church. The church is very important for me. I can spend time with my friends in the church. I feel gratitude for my church because I feel hope and faith. I can pray there, and I find answers to my questions. I feel like

part of the church. This is a place of peace for me. In the church, I feel relief and calm. I meet friends who share my values. In addition, when I am having a hard time, and I don't know how to get out of the situation, I ask my friends at church to pray for me. After that, my soul feels enlightened. Indeed, I love my church like my life.



Last of all, I am grateful for my ability to see. I can see the sun and the moon. I enjoy the starry sky. Vision helps me see the needs of other people, so I can help them. I can read and write because I see. These skills allow me to develop. I am grateful for my ability to see because I can see my daughter and my husband. I see them, and my heart is filled with joy and happiness. When I look into my husband's eyes, I feel peace and confidence. Watching my child grow and discover the world, I feel pride and endless gratitude for every moment. I can drive a car and bicycle. I can walk in the park. I can study in the college. I can see different colors. I can see the smiles of children. Indeed, I am very grateful for my ability to see because I feel happy.

In conclusion, these things make me feel very grateful. I feel lucky to have these things in my life.

Snizhana Gerasymova - ESL 47
Opinion Essay

Snowflakes, Bread & Books

What is a hobby? A hobby is a favorite pastime activity. Most people's hobbies are varied: fishing, collecting, hunting, traveling, or painting. My favorite hobbies are reading, cutting snowflakes, and baking bread.

Reading has been my favorite hobby since childhood. As a child, I often took children's books from the library and read a lot. Reading has many benefits. First, people who read a lot are smart people. For example, each book gives new knowledge. Furthermore, reading helps us to learn new words. Next, reading develops imagination. Moreover, when I read a book, a special picture of what I read is drawn in my head. Lastly, reading is relaxing. Besides that, it helps to distract and focus on something else. Indeed, reading is my favorite hobby because it has several benefits such as mental development, imagination development, and relaxation.

Cutting snowflakes has several advantages, so it is my favorite hobby. The first advantage is fun. For instance, paper cutting lifts the mood and helps me to relax. Second, it develops creativity. Moreover, each



snowflake is special and does not look like another, so this work is creative. The last advantage is the special Christmas decoration in my house. For example, snowflakes are very cute, unusual and affordable decorations. Additionally, on the eve of Christmas,

my children and I always cut many snowflakes and sing carols. This hobby is a family tradition. Indeed, cutting snowflakes is my fun that helps me to develop creativity and decorate the house in an unusual way for the Christmas holiday; therefore, it is my favorite hobby.

Baking bread has many benefits; therefore, it is my favorite hobby. First, working with dough is

soothing. For example, the dough is very pleasant to the touch; therefore, working with it is a pleasure. Moreover, when my grandmother was baking bread, it was impossible to quarrel and shout because the bread would not turn out. Next, learning new recipes develops creativity. In addition, I am interested in baking bread from white flour like buns or bread with bran or seeds. Lastly, this hobby always brings fresh bread



to our table and saves money. Furthermore, I like the smell of freshly baked bread because it reminds me of my childhood. In addition, I often treat my friends to delicious and healthy bread. Beyond that, baking bread is my tradition. Indeed, baking bread always soothes, develops creativity, and provides my family with fresh bread, so it is my special hobby.



In conclusion, I am very interested in reading interesting books, cutting special snowflakes, and baking healthy and tasty bread,

so these are my hobbies. Some people deal with their hobby like a chicken with an egg. They also spend a lot of money and free time on it with extra income. Other people, on the contrary, turn their hobby into an additional income or their life's work. I think that it is not important because hobbies always have to bring fun.

Liudmyla Peshko - ESL 47
Opinion Essay

Parrot Palette: Sewing



My name is Natalia. I'm from Russia, and I moved to the USA with my husband and two kids less than two years ago. This is my first semester at ARC. I took ESL47, which im-

proved my English. I like playing tennis and board games with my family and friends. I also enjoy growing flowers, especially roses.

Everybody in my family loves crafts. Even my father can knit socks. My grandmother liked knitting, and she made the "Orenburg down scarf," which is really popular in Russia. My mom sewed and knitted clothes for my sister and me and she taught me cross-stitch embroidery. My sister and I often made clothes for our dolls, which was my first experience with sewing. When I was a teenager, I attended a craft club where we learned macrame, sewing, and knitting. For a long time, I was fond of cross-stitch embroidery. I have some of my work in Russia, and I hope I can bring them here.



When I grew up and had my first daughter, who at three years old started attending art gymnastics classes, I decided to sew her a gymnastics leotard for a competition. It was my first serious project after a long break. I didn't have formal training or complete any sewing courses; I just watched videos on YouTube. After that, I decided to make something else and sewed shirts for my kids. Then, I started making clothes for my family and friends. Finally, I opened my own alteration business. Usually, I use ready-made patterns, but sometimes I create my own.

In addition to sewing, I like stitching, crocheting, and knitting toys, and I am teaching my daughter now. I am also interested in embroidery and trying to make some projects with my embroidery machine.



For me, sewing is not just a hobby; it's a world where I can express myself and my ideas. I relax and enjoy the process when I make something with my own hands. When I make clothes for my clients, I feel happy and satisfied when I see the results.

Some of my favorite projects are



clothes suitable for kids. My second favorite and one of the most challenging projects was sewing a fur coat.

A few months ago, I organized a "Crafty Kids Club" for children from our church. I taught them how to sew bears. I decided to continue this project with kids and add some classes for sewing, knitting, and crocheting. In the future, I plan to start a second sewing class for teenagers, where they will learn to make clothes for themselves.

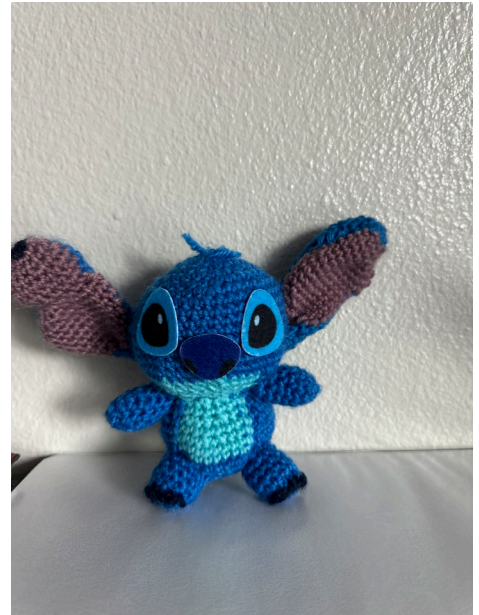


I have an Instagram account, but I don't have a business selling clothes yet.

Right now, I sew clothes only for myself and my family.

Once, I received an order from my kickboxing coach for his birthday. I needed to make a backpack with embroidery. It was a challenging project for me, but I did it, and it was a really good present for my coach.

Projects like the backpack for my coach or sewing 120 suits for a team of gymnasts were new and difficult for me. There were challenges and mistakes, but they taught me not to give up, to plan, and they gave me confidence in myself for the future.



My biggest dream is to open my own clothing brand. Maybe it will remain just a dream, or maybe God will help me make it happen. Right now, I want to improve my Crafty Club for the kids and my English. Maybe in the future, I will decide to pursue a degree in Fashion at ARC and open my own business. Everything is according to God's will.

Natalia Zababurina - ESL 47 Interview

Reading for Beginners

A Friday with My Son

Today is Friday. On Fridays, my son stays home. He does not go to childcare. He is two and a half years old. He is smart and loves to play a lot.

Last week, I bought him some fishing toys. This morning, he woke up and took his fishing toys. He asked me, "Can we go to the swimming pool?" The pool is right in front of our apartment.

But today it is cloudy and a little cold. I told him, "We cannot go to the pool today. If we play with water, we might get sick." My son looked sad.

Then I said, "We can go to your aunt's house. You can play with your cousins." He smiled. He took a shower and got ready to go to his aunt's house.



Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi

Photos created by ChatGPT AI.

Can You Answer These Questions?

1. What day is it in the story?

- a. Monday
- b. Friday
- c. Saturday
- d. Sunday

2. Where does the son stay on Fridays?

- a. At childcare
- b. At school
- c. At his aunt's house
- d. At home

3. What toy did the dad buy last week?

- a. A toy car
- b. A fishing toy
- c. A puzzle
- d. A ball

4. Why did they not go to the swimming pool?

- a. It was raining.
- b. It was too hot.
- c. It was cloudy and cold.
- d. The pool was closed.

5. How did the boy feel when he heard they couldn't go fishing?

- a. Happy
- b. Angry
- c. Sad
- d. Excited

6. What made the boy happy again?

- a. Watching TV
- b. Playing with his toys
- c. Going to school
- d. Visiting his aunt and cousins

Answers: 1. B 2. D 3. B 4. C 5. C 6. D



Would you like to
contribute to *The Parrot*?

If you want to share your work, art,
opinion, or anything else with
The Parrot, please email us at
TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu. We would be
happy to hear from you and will try to
respond ASAP.

The Parrot welcomes all ESL student
matters!



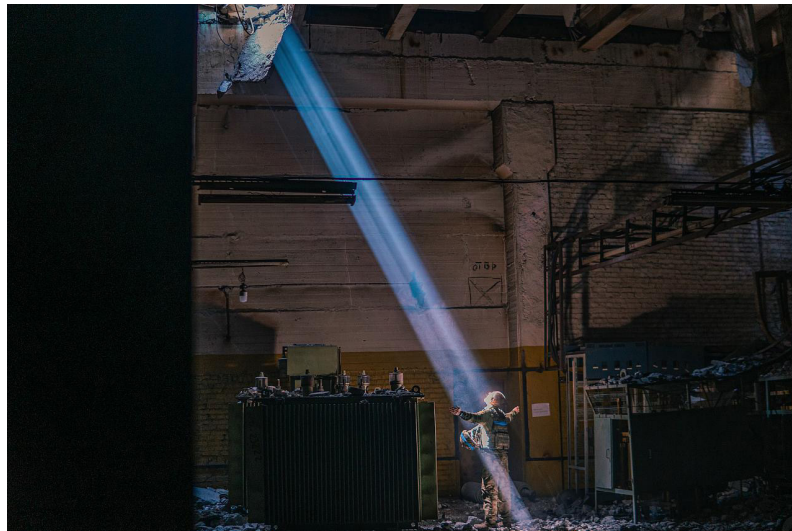
Continued from page 1

cent lives and brought a lot of troubles to many countries. And now, the war in Ukraine is going according to the same scenario. Once the United States took the side of good by helping Great Britain during the Second World War, and this help played a decisive role in the victory of good over evil, and now Ukraine vitally needs the support of the United States. Of course, there are people who argue that the United States should not interfere in someone else's conflict so as not to aggravate it and spend their money on helping Ukraine. The position of such people is absolutely understandable, but the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine is not a mild cold that will pass by itself. In this situation, strong intervention is needed to stop the aggression that, like a cancer cell, wants to engulf the entire organism called the world. Therefore, this essay will consider three reasons why the United States should support Ukraine, namely, these are to first help Ukraine win back its democratic values, second, to continue the nation's significant contribution to ensuring global security, and third, help to encourage economic stability.

The United States of America, by helping Ukraine, contributes to the preservation of democratic values and human rights. Ukraine is a young state that has freed itself from a dictatorial regime and does not want to return to it ever again. The violation of the integrity of the sovereign state of Ukraine occurred in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and some territories of Donbas. Since February 2022, Russia has begun a brutal aggression with the aim of destroying Ukraine as a state and seizing its territories. Since the beginning of

the full-scale war, over 46,000 soldiers and about 13,000 civilians have died from Russian shelling, including more than 700 children (Court). An even greater number of Ukrainians have been injured. Unfortunately, these numbers are increasing every day, but in fact, these are not numbers, these are the lives of adults and children who are unfairly and illegally taken away every day by Russian terrorist attacks. Russia has also illegally seized hundreds of miles of Ukrainian territory, destroying entire cities in the process. During this military conflict, about 1,000,000 Ukrainian citizens, including more than 20,000 children, were illegally taken

to the territory of the Russian Federation (Senate). The United States of America has always condemned violence, violations of human rights and democratic values. Having once chosen freedom and democracy, America has forever sided with truth. By sup-



Ukrainian soldier Dmytro "Orest" Kozatskyi stands in Azovstal, lit by sunlight -- a symbol of hope during the siege of Mariupol, 2022

porting the democratic principles of Ukraine, the United States sets an example for the whole world. During his speech in Lithuania, President Joe Biden emphasized that the United States of America strives for a world in which security and prosperity, freedom and sovereignty reign (Remarks). In the same speech, the previous president clearly expressed his position in support of Ukraine and called on NATO countries to do the same, which cannot yet be said unequivocally about the current president. Nevertheless, the United States of America, as one of the leaders of the Western world, has always advocated the protection of human rights, freedom and democracy. Assistance to Ukraine helps strengthen these values and demonstrates that aggression against sovereign states will not remain without consequences. This is an important

signal for other countries that may become the target of authoritarian regimes.

The United States of America should continue to help Ukraine, since its support is an important factor in ensuring global security and stability. Some people say that military support for Ukraine may lead to an escalation of the conflict and subsequently to a world war. The concern of people who think this way is understandable, but it is necessary to understand that the fight against Russia's illegal actions towards Ukraine are strategically important for both European countries and for the United States. In fact, supporting Ukraine helps to defend the international order based on rules, where states cannot change borders by force, otherwise chaos will begin. According to scientists from the Institute for Leadership and Management Studies, if the

United States continues to support Ukraine and increases this support, it will thus help save millions of lives and prevent a third world war, given Putin's imperial ambitions (Sonnenfeld & Tian). For example, as it was during World War II. It was the United States that played a key role in providing assistance to England, thereby stopping the madness of the German dictator. It is no secret that Ukraine, both politically and territorially, is an important partner in the fight against Russian influence and the spread of authoritarian regimes. The Moscow government violated international norms and agreements when they invaded Ukraine. In doing so, they threatened stability in Europe. Without a strong response from the international community, and in particular the United States, Russia may

feel impunity and continue to violate peace agreements, which will ultimately lead to a larger military conflict. Therefore, support for Ukraine serves as an important tool to deter aggression from Russia and ensure security on a global scale.

Military and financial support for Ukraine is an investment in global economic stability. It is known that some people believe that aid to Ukraine is a waste of money. Of course, the opinion of taxpayers is important, but in this matter it is worth assessing the situation by looking a little ahead. According to researchers, the United States

only benefits from providing military and strategically important aid to Ukraine because the most important ammunition for Ukraine is produced in the United States (Sonnenfeld & Tian). For example, Javelins are produced in Alabama, and multiple launch rocket



systems are produced in West Virginia, Arkansas, and Texas. It is also necessary to take into account other means such as night vision devices, ammunition for small arms, medical supplies and other less expensive but vital things for Ukraine. Everything that has already arrived in Ukraine was taken from very old stocks, dating back to the Second World War (Sonnenfeld & Tian). Their place on the shelves of US military warehouses was taken by modern analogues. This not only refreshed military stocks but also replenished the country's budget. And if you go one step higher, you will see that financial assistance to Ukraine now is an investment in the future. After all, we are talking not only about a specific country, Ukraine. In this case, the security of Ukraine directly affects the security of Europe.

This includes issues of energy security and control over the most important trade routes. It is known that once having provided military and financial assistance to South Korea, the United States not only helped this country win and restore its economy after a military conflict with North Korea, but also found a reliable partner with whom they successfully exchange profitable investments. We can conclude that good is returned with good. In addition, support for Ukraine strengthens the position of the



United States in Europe and on the international arena, helping to prevent the expansion of Russian influence, which in turn has a positive effect on global economic stability.

In conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that by continuing to help Ukraine, the United States supports it in the fight for democratic values and helps maintain security and economic stability in the world. Thus, helping Ukraine is not an escalation of the conflict and not a waste of money. At the moment, it is a matter of life and death. By helping Ukraine now, the United States, without exaggeration, saves the lives of innocent people, because adults and children of Ukraine die almost every day from Russian aggression. By providing assistance now, the United States invests in future security. After all, stopping Putin's imperial ambitions is the same as stopping a disease that wants to swallow the whole body. By helping Ukraine, the United States defends its economic interests and makes significant investments in economic stability in the world. Thus, the greatest country in the

world cannot stand aside and not take the side of good. The United States must help Ukraine preserve not only its integrity and democracy, but also the lives of innocent people who still have a chance to stay alive.

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Olena Kurus - ESL 325
Argument Essay

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

ELLIS Stories & News from SCC

Did you hear that *The Parrot* is no longer flying solo around Los Rios? There is a new newsletter drafting through the skies! Sacramento City College ESL students and faculty have combined their efforts to produce: [ELLIS Stories & News](#). The newsletter just published its second issue, and it looks great. We wanted to introduce you to two of the people who made it come to life: Mercedes Centeno and ESL Professor Joanna Prado.

Mercedes Centeno is an ELLIS Tutor and ESL Ambassador at SCC. *She is originally from a small community in El Salvador. Her major is animation, and she is looking forward to transferring to Chico State soon. She loves traditional drawing (on paper) and digital drawing techniques. She also loves eating outside, and really enjoys visiting big and small towns. She shared her reflections on a few questions about her involvement with this new newsletter.*

How did you get involved with *ELLIS Stories & News*?

This is kind of a long story. It started when I decided to work in the [ELLIS Center](#) as a tutor, and began meeting and talking to more people within the ESL community. After a few weeks, Prof. Prado mentioned the idea of starting a newsletter for our ESL department written by students. I got interested in the idea, so I assisted in the creation

of our first issue. Since the first issue was very well received, I was so excited about the creation of our second issue for this semester.

Did you have to learn a lot of new skills to create this newsletter?

I definitely learned a lot of new skills in this process. The first thing I noticed about myself is the desire to do something outside of the classroom. It's so satisfying to work hard on an independent task and also make a change in our community. I learned how to make and express our voices stronger and noticeable, and to be

able to give other people courage to express themselves as well. Besides this, it was easy to take nice photos of our community and our space. So many students were happy to participate. Then, the most difficult part in the creation of the newsletter was the color choices. I worked with other students and professors to find a good color palette.

We have a big variety

of stories in the second issue, so choosing the correct theme colors was kind of challenging for me and the rest of the participants.

You have done two issues so far, right? Is there any part of the newsletter that you are particularly proud about?

Yes, this is my second time getting involved

May, 2025 +

ISSUE #2

ELLIS STORIES & NEWS

Your SCC newsletter by and for ESL, multi-cultural, immigrant, and international students



3835 Freeport Boulevard
SACRAMENTO, CA 95822

Inside this Issue

- Student Stories
- Motivational Thoughts
- Favorite Idiom
- Memorial Spotlight

Welcome to the ELLIS Stories & News Second Edition!

Mercedes Centeno
ELLIS Tutor & ESL Ambassador

in the newsletter as a writer and designer. The part that I really love about the newsletter is the first page. I took most of the photos that are on that page and fulfilled my vision of having a collage instead of a main single photo. I feel like those photos represent very well the diversity, kindness, friendship and teamwork within the ELLIS Center.

What does this newsletter mean to you?

Personally, this newsletter meant a big opportunity to start developing my art and design skills. I'm so satisfied with how the opportunity came and for my chance to test my creativity and start creating things to publish. This newsletter is also part of my contribution to my ESL community.

Professor Joanna Prado is a professor of ESL at Sacramento City College. *She is the faculty advisor for [ELLIS Stories & News](#), but she recognizes the support of colleagues who have gone to planning meetings and encouraged their students to get involved. She gave some insights into the creation of this project.*



"Blooming Together" by Mercedes Centeno

For the first issue, students who came to the planning meetings volunteered to write something. Everything was written specifically for the newsletter. For the second issue, many of the stories were written for a course assignment and their teachers helped them submit. The articles written by the ELLIS tutors and ambassadors were written

specifically for the newsletter.

The main challenges in starting the newsletter were time and the determination to do it. Professor Prado explained, "I've always admired *The Parrot* at ARC and thought it would be nice to have something similar at SCC but felt like I didn't have time to make it happen. In my role as ELLIS Coordinator, I have a little more flexibility with my time and I was able to prioritize and commit to it. Once I told the department that I wanted to do it,

they were very supportive, and the students got very excited about it. The student excitement was really the key. I was very fortunate that it was there because I wanted it to be a student paper with students doing the writing and making the decisions. Their excitement and involvement are the reasons we have the amazing newsletter that we do." She further reported that the reactions from the students whose work was published were very positive. She believes the mission of ELLIS News & Stories is to highlight the amazing students and their voices, and she hopes that students will con-

tinue to get involved and keep it going.

Congratulations again to Mercedes, Professor Prado, and all the ESL students and faculty at Sacramento City College! We can't wait to see the next issue!

My First Educational Conference: APAHE 2025 in Oakland

Attending the 2025 APAHE (Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education) Conference in Oakland was one of the most memorable and meaningful experiences of my academic journey. As



an Afghan woman facing many limitations, I never imagined I would attend such an empowering educational event, but thanks to the support of the [ARC PRISE Learning Community](#), that dream became a reality.

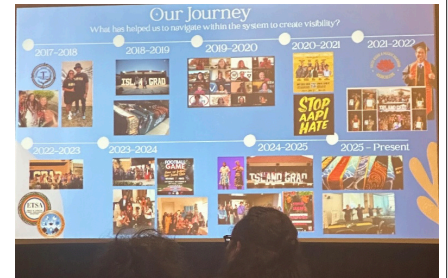
When I received the email notification from PRISE about the opportunity, I didn't hesitate to apply. A few days later, I was thrilled to get the acceptance email confirming that I had been approved to attend the conference. It was such a proud and exciting moment for me.

On April 10th, our journey to Oakland began. A bus was arranged for participating students, and we were guided by a wonderful professor and her assistant. During the ride, I even had the chance to do an interview, which made the experience even more memorable.

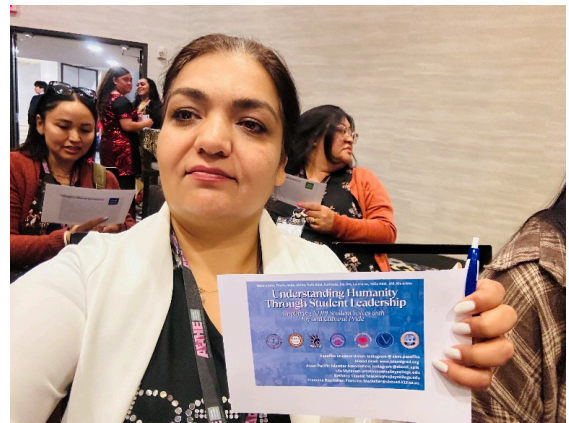
The conference was held at the Marriott Hotel in Oakland, a welcoming and professional environment with multiple breakout rooms, educational outreach tables, and inspiring discussions and



lectures. We were provided breakfast through the conference program, and ARC PRISE took care of our lunch. It was heartwarming to feel so supported throughout the day.



This was my first educational tour with ARC, and I am truly grateful. I learned so much, from lead-



ership skills to cultural awareness and educational equity. Being part of this event made me feel seen, empowered, and more hopeful about the future.

I highly encourage all students to take advantage of opportunities like this. They can be life-changing. Not only do you learn, but you grow in confidence and connection. I will always carry this experience with me as a reminder of what is possible, even when the odds seem high.

Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi

Spring 2025



Student Health & Wellness Center
Located Between Student Center and Community Rooms

Learn More About Your LOS RIOS STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

available to currently enrolled students!

**Try it Out
Talk it Out**

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Peer Support:

Safe, **anonymous, peer-to-peer** platform 24/7, ability to filter to find their global community



Therapy and Advocacy:

Meet with a Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC) therapist or advocate, **in person or virtually**.



Online Therapy:

Talk to an online licensed therapist during the day, **evenings, and weekends**.



Gender Health Center: Free therapy services (in-person or virtual) for those who identify as **SGL/2SLGBTQIA+ or questioning**.

FREE Mental Health Services

WHAT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT WORKS BEST FOR YOU?

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In-person appointments	✓	✗
Available during traditional hours	✓	✓
Available during evenings and weekends	✗	✓
Remote appointments (Zoom)	✓	✓
Walk-in / emergency visits	✓	✗
Ability to select therapist based on demographics, identities, lived experiences, and specialties	✓	✓
If therapy isn't the right choice for you, maybe peer support is. Access 24/7 online peer support through Togetherall .		

FREE Physical Health Services

- Health and illness assessments
- First aid for minor injuries and illness
- Over-the-counter medications
- Narcan and fentanyl testing strips
- Pregnancy testing
- Sexual health concerns/education
- Covid self-tests
- Condoms (male and female) and lubricant
- Flu A/B testing
- Flu vaccine
- Strep throat testing
- TB risk assessments
- Health requirements for academic programs
- Immunizations/titers*
- TB skin test*

*Low Cost



For more information and to make an appointment, scan here!

Pick up your **FREE Party Safe Toolkits** at your Student Health and Wellness Center!

- Narcan
- Fentanyl Test Strip
- Drink Cover
- Drink Spike Test Strip

*Currently enrolled students



Continued from page 1**How did your educational journey begin? What inspired you to pursue higher education and get a master's degree, and what obstacles did you face early on?**

The way my educational journey started when I first started elementary school in the United States, I did not like school at all. My experience with the educational system was very negative. I did not like school when I was in 6th grade in the Bay Area. I received a lot of bullying, but at that time I did not know what it meant. I had kids calling me a terrorist and things like that, but I didn't quite understand the meaning enough to feel the impact of it. We had a class lesson and I remember my teacher teaching about 9/11. That's when I found out that it was actually discriminatory what they were saying to me. And that's when the feelings of like, oh wow, they're bullying me. These things started coming into play. And that's when I started to experience my first depression signs. And so I went to middle school with the same mentality, like fight or flight.

When I met with my counselor in high school, beginning freshman year, she had mentioned that she foresees me going to continuation high school because she just thought that I was with the wrong crowd. I actually took that very personally. And I said, well, no, I'm not. I can do the work. And I did. I actually got really good grades. I wanted to prove her wrong. And I did. I surpassed it. I remember one day in class, she came with a certificate and she said to the whole class what she had said that to me and I proved her wrong and that I actually taught her something. Actually, I didn't even start off with a major in psychology. I started off with criminal justice, but then I switched. And once I started taking classes in psychology, I fell in love with the brain



Fiji -- Shelvina's homeland.

and the power of the brain. So, I stuck with it.

Did your experiences with bullying in school inspire you to continue your education in psychology?

Actually, no. Because by high school, all of that was over. It wasn't as bad. It was there, but that was not a determination of me not going to school. I just internally felt like I was not built for education. No one in my family has gone to school, number one. Number two, I knew at that time my sister was also trying to pursue a college degree. And I said, well, if my parents are going to support her, how are they going to ever support me? So, I was not really inspired. I was just given the tools, and I think what inspired me really was my first semester when I went there and I saw the difference. It was really

like you are independent, you get to make your own choices. People treat you with so much respect and you're just finding yourself. That's how I felt my first semester in college. And I was in different programs. I was in student government, which I never thought I would be part of. I

was a senator, I was in TRIO.

What is TRIO?

TRIO is Student Support Services. TRIO is federally funded, and it's on campus here too. You have to be eligible to be part of it. It's because it's federally funded. It's similar to EOPS, but they have their own separate qualifications. I think TRIO did change my life a lot because when I found out that I was eligible to be part of TRIO based on my eligibility of being a first generation, I found resources like free tutoring, free access to campus visits to UCS and CSUs, and I got the opportunity to stay in the dorms at UCLA.

Earning a degree as a first-generation student comes with unique pressures. Were there moments when you doubted yourself? If so, what kept you going?

Because my parents didn't know how to navigate school and had never been to college, I didn't really have them to ask questions. What do I do now? I met with a counselor. What's next? How do I choose? What major, what path? These are the career choices. I couldn't really talk to my parents. It was really doing it on my own – doing the FAFSA, having them sign and showing them the way. I was on my own. I had to explain what FAFSA meant and what they had to sign, translating it into their language. I had to navigate college myself. I had to find resources by myself, so a lot of the things that come with the first generation is hit or miss. That's why the work that I do is so meaningful because at the People Culture & Society Homebase, when I see first-generation students, I see that they're still thinking about whether they can truly feel safe enough to come and ask for help. Because sometimes we feel like if we ask something, it's a stupid question. All this self-doubt is there, and it's always been there. And I feel like every first-generation student who's dealing with finding their place is also dealing with self-limiting beliefs.

Studying is already overwhelming, and even more so when you are of another nationality. What was the hardest academic moment when this felt like a true barrier, and how did you push through it?

In school, a lot of it was about feeling not good enough, maybe because of the way I looked, and people treated me differently. But in college, actu-



“Sometimes we feel like if we ask something, it’s a stupid question. All this self-doubt is there, and it’s always been there.”

ally, I think because I went to a very diverse college, Skyline College in the Bay Area, when you walk there and see a group, no one group looks the same – there are so many people who look different. You fit in, and you don't really feel different. Even if you're an ESL student or anyone who's different, you literally fit in, and it feels like a community. That specific school literally changed my life. It really is about the school you go to. And I think

community college prepped me for San Francisco State University and Golden Gate University. Because there were times when I felt imposter syndrome, thinking maybe I didn't belong in higher education. You start doubting yourself, thinking maybe this wasn't for me. But it has nothing to do with intelligence. It's just a limiting belief you tell yourself based on your own experiences.

Tell us about your journey at ARC. When did you start working as a Specialist in People, Culture, and Society Homebase, and what do you do in that role?

I started in February of 2022 as a First-Year Experience Success Coach. My job at that time was to work only with first-time college students. I met a lot of students like myself first-generation, low-income, ESL students. And it was amazing because I got to share so much of my own stories with them. Then, within seven months, I had an opportunity to be the Interim Language and People HomeBase Coach. I did that interim role for three months, got the interview, and got the position for the People, Culture & Society HomeBase. I moved up really fast. But I still work with first-time college students because now First-Year Experience is basically added to HomeBases. I still work with first-time college students and current students, so I work with all, which is amazing.

When were the crucial moments in your life when you realized, “Yes! I’m on the right path. I can do this, and I need to push harder to achieve success”?

I remember when I was studying psychology, I became so obsessed with the brain. I actually wanted to pursue something in neuroscience. I wanted to be a neurologist and even considered neurosurgery. Then, as I started working in student health, I realized I wanted to do something with youth. Eventually, I got promoted in college to work as a temporary classified staff member at Skyline College. It was there that I recognized how much I love serving students because I understood what they were going through. Helping someone felt really good and rewarding. I realized this was something I truly love doing, and I don’t regret it at all.

Did you ever face a moment when you wanted to give up? If so, what made you keep going?

Yes, all the time. Because I wasn’t just a student; I am also a mom with two kids. Being a mom, working full-time, and going to school at the same time, I literally felt like I didn’t know who I was. There were moments when I wanted to give up, not just because I wanted to give up on students, but because of my own personal struggles – illnesses, mental health challenges, and postpartum depression. Sometimes, I feel like giving up just because I don’t feel good enough, dealing with imposter syndrome and self-limiting beliefs. But you know what keeps me going? My children. It’s so crazy. It’s like a circle.

If you could go back to your first day as an ESL student and give yourself one piece of advice,

what would it be?

The one thing I would tell myself is that I will make it and that I shouldn’t worry, just push through it and be resilient and persistent, which is what I tell myself to this day. I still deal with battles, I still deal with things, but I tell myself that if I give up, then I shouldn’t feel bad if my children give up, and I don’t want them to give up. I would tell myself not to give up.

Success often looks different from the inside than it does from the outside. What would you say to ESL students who might feel uncertain about their place in higher education or question whether they deserve their success?

I would say success looks different for every single person. Not one person is the same. If one person is taking an ESL class and completes one class, that’s your achievement, and that’s an amazing achievement.

It’s an achievement for you. I remember the day when I started understanding little things, like when I would read something in the paper and think, “Oh, I know what they’re asking.” That’s an achievement. Or if I’m talking to the teacher, and when I ask a question, they understand what I’m asking, and they’re like, “Oh yeah, okay, well, you do it this way.” I feel that that’s an achievement. And achievement isn’t something like, “Oh, I got my degree.” Yes, that’s an achievement, but achievement is also the little things that sometimes get forgotten or fall through the cracks. But if you really think about it, every little thing that ESL students are doing to improve themselves, those are all achievements.



Shelvina shared a photo from Fiji

“Achievement is also the little things that sometimes get forgotten or fall through the cracks.”

If you could switch lives with anyone for a day, who would it be?

My kids. I would switch with my five-year-old because he goes to a Montessori kindergarten. It's a whole different world. Their brains are moving so much faster, they're communicating on a different level, and the amount of fun they have there is incredible. I would definitely switch with my son. When I see him so happy coming home from school, sitting with me, and telling me all about his experience, I'm filled with happiness. And when I think about my own elementary school experience, I'm so happy because I will never get that experience myself, but I'm living it through him.

What's something you've always wanted to try but haven't yet?

African dish *fufu*. It's made from cassava – and cassava is a huge thing in Fiji – yams, corn, sweet potato or oatmeal.



A picture from Fiji, shared by Shelvina

Have you ever turned in an assignment late or not been prepared for class?

Yeah, always. I used to wait until the last minute. And then, once I started going to college and started getting the right tools, I was doing assignments a month before they were due, especially research papers.

If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

The one superpower I wish I really did have is to have empathy in everyone's heart, to be kind to each other.

What's one word that best describes your journey?

Resilience.

Thank you for the interview. It was a pleasure having a conversation with you.

Interviewer: Sofia Kovalko

The Sweet Delight of *Shirpera*

If you've ever had a craving for something sweet that carries the warmth of tradition and the richness of culture, let me introduce you to *shirpera*, a beloved Afghan confection that lives somewhere between fudge and nougat. This melt-in-your-mouth treat, also known as *sheer pira* (which literally means "milk candy"), is more than just a dessert. For me, it's a nostalgic bite of childhood, a connection to home, and a sweet memory wrapped in rosewater and cardamom.

While *shirpera* is often served during Eid, weddings, and other big celebrations, it's also something that's deeply woven into everyday

Afghan life. Back home in Herat, where I was born and raised, it wasn't unusual to see small business owners and shopkeepers sipping tea with a piece of *shirpera* in hand, especially during the mid-morning or afternoon hours. It's a snack that fits seamlessly into ordinary moments — humble, but incredibly satisfying. That everyday presence is exactly what makes *shirpera* special to me.

As a kid growing up in Herat, I played soccer competitively for nearly seven years on an official team. We practiced three days a week, and match days were every Friday. Those games were big community events, so families, neighbors, and

friends would gather to cheer from the sidelines. It wasn't just about the sport; it was a celebration of unity, of life.

At those matches, there was an "uncle" (I wish I remembered his name), who ran a tiny tea stall on the side of the field. His setup was simple, but to me, magical. He served hot Afghan tea with *shirpera* on the side, and the taste of that pairing after a game or even while watching others play was something I'll never forget. It was sweet, warm, and comforting, like being wrapped in a familiar hug.

Even now, thousands of miles away from Herat, I sometimes buy *shirpera* and enjoy it with tea here in the U.S., often with my family or friends. I still love the flavor, but nothing quite compares to the way it tasted back then, sitting on the edge of a soccer field, sweaty and tired, the cheers of the crowd in the

background, and that magical tea with a small piece of *shirpera* melting in my mouth.

The beauty of *shirpera* lies not only in its taste but in its simplicity. It starts with sugar and water and is then cooked into a thick syrup. Cardamom and rosewater give it that unmistakable Afghan aroma. Then come the nuts including pistachios, almonds, and sometimes even walnuts. Finally, whole milk powder is folded in to create a thick, creamy mixture. Once poured into a tray and

smoothed, it rests overnight and sets into soft, chewy squares. Homemade or store-bought, the scent alone brings memories rushing back.

Though I live far from the sweet shops of Herat now, *shirpera* still finds a place in my kitchen, and in my heart. It's a sweet that connects generations, cultures, and moments both big and small. So next time you're looking for something new to try with your tea or just want a taste of Afghan culture, give *shirpera* a chance. You might just find your own memory hidden in its flavor.

Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi

Photo Credits:

1. <https://www.thekitchn.com/shirpera-23157804>
2. <https://www.thekitchn.com/find-joy-afghan-sweets-eid-parwana-23157798>



Credit: Alicia Taylor



Credit: Emmaline Zanelli

Granny Noetal

Welcome to the Granny Noetal Column! Our student staff is pleased to share valuable tips and advice to support you on your academic journey at ARC.

Dear Granny,

From the very beginning of the semester, I have been struggling to concentrate on my studies. I keep getting distracted while doing homework and can't complete assignments properly. When writing essays, I find it hard to gather my thoughts because I keep thinking about other commitments that aren't related to studying. Since I usually study at home, the desire to relax or spend time with my family often pulls me away from my work. I'm really upset about this because I end up turning in assignments late and receiving lower grades as a result. I would be very grateful for any advice on how to overcome this problem.

Thanks,
Distressed Student

Dear Distressed Student,

It is really sad that you are struggling with distractions during your studies and have started getting lower grades. However, there are great solutions I can suggest to help you solve this problem. First of all, I recommend not using social media while doing homework, as it can easily pull you away from important tasks. Since you mostly get distracted at home, try to find a place where you can fully concentrate on your studies, like a quiet spot in the college library or a cozy place in a coffee shop. If external noise distracts you, try listening to calm, relaxing music to help you stay focused.



I hope these recommendations will help you become more engaged with your studies!

Thanks,
Granny Noetal

Dear Readers,

I hope you found my advice to the student's question helpful. I am thankful for the information and experience a student shared with us. If you need some advice, please share your question with me at:

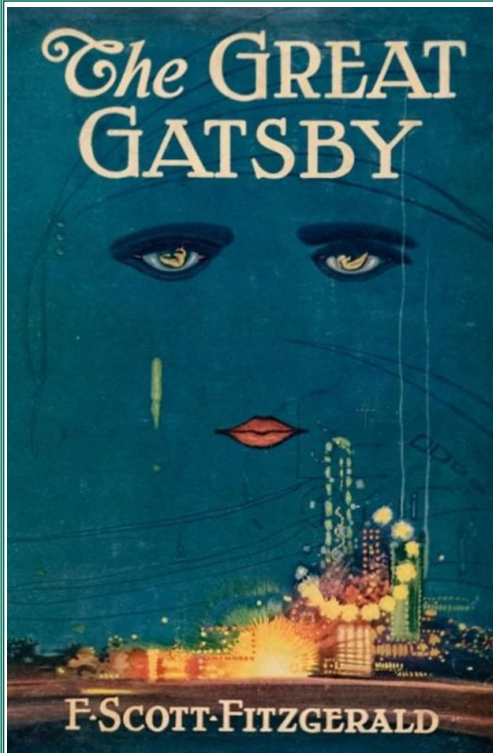
Granny Noetal

TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu



The Greatness of *The Great Gatsby*, Now 100 Years Old

by ESL Professor David Evans



If you have not yet read F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, now is a great occasion to do so. If you have already read it, you might consider rereading it. Published on 10 April 1925, the novel has just turned 100 years old and deserves, in

my opinion, to be properly celebrated. That the book has been adored by generations of readers is evidenced not only by its having been assigned in high-school English classes for many decades, but also by its having been made four times into a film. Readers of the novel today think of Leonardo DiCaprio in the lead role of Jay Gatsby in the most recent film version (2013), but those of my parents' generation tend to think of the 1974 version, starring Robert Redford. The oldest people alive today likely think of the 1949 film version, now available, as are the rest of the film versions, on DVD.



The 1949 screen adaptation with Alan Ladd as Gatsby

But no one, in my opinion, can truly be said to have experienced *The Great Gatsby* unless they have read the book itself—not in haste, but leisurely and thoughtfully. Those of us who were forced to read it in high school may not have experienced it fully during that first encounter. In any case, we may experience it differently now, upon rereading it, than we experienced it then. I have never forgotten something a very inspiring high-school English teacher of mine told us students when she assigned us *The Great Gatsby*. She encouraged us to read it again when we got older, indicating we would see the story in an entirely new light. How right she was! It was in 1995 that she said that to us. Upon rereading the book in 2020, I did indeed see much more in it—so much more, in fact, that I have since become something of a *Gatsby* scholar.

What has drawn me to the book more than anything else is its exquisite use of English. Fitzgerald's prose in the novel has aptly been described as "silken." I marvel at the graceful symmetry of sentences like this one: "A maid began opening the upper windows of his house, appeared momentarily in each, and, leaning from a large central bay, spat meditatively into the garden." Fitzgerald often uses personification effectively, too, as in this description of a road in the first sentence of the second chapter: "About half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land."

Fitzgerald's diction and syntax, there and

in many other sentences, imparts a sense of things being in motion and doing things rather than being statically at rest: "A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding-cake of the ceiling, and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea." Occasionally, his sentences are pure poetry. My favorite is this one: "They were gone, without a word, snapped out, made accidental, isolated, like ghosts, even from our pity." The style in which *The Great Gatsby* is written can, I think, be savored by native and nonnative speakers of English alike.

Although style is not the same thing as content, the content of *The Great Gatsby*—its plot, character development, and themes—can best be appreciated only in the light of the language in which it is conveyed; and that is why no film can ever, in my opinion, do this novel complete justice. The plot does not take place in a single dimension. As the narrator, Nick Carraway, states on the very first page, "we've [his father and he have] always been unusually communicative in a reserved way." The same holds true of the story he narrates; it's unusually communicative, but reserv-

edly so. It gestures at larger meanings without fully delineating them. Consequently, at least for those of us who have fallen under the novel's spell, the text offers a wholesome nutshell that can be cracked open in many different ways.



Robert Redford starred as Gatsby in the 1974 film.

On the surface level, we are presented with Jay Gatsby, a millionaire who resides in an opulent Long Island mansion next to the narrator in the summer of 1922 and hosts ostentatiously extravagant, open-door parties for people whom he hardly even knows, hoping, as we eventually learn, to attract to himself a young married woman, Daisy, who resides just across the bay. Daisy is the narrator's second cousin once removed. Gatsby

fell in love with her five years earlier before going away for several years to fight in World War I, during which time Daisy got married to a rich man named Tom Buchanan, with whom she subsequently had a daughter.

Even without going into a subplot concerning Tom and his mistress, Myrtle (a character whom Myrtle Avenue, next to ARC, now always brings to my mind), not to mention Gatsby's dishonest means of supplying his seemingly infinite cash reserves, one senses from the above description a certain moral tension, if not an abyss of sin, at work in the novel. What right does Gatsby have to try to woo a married woman and make her his own? How can this form the basis of the plot of what some consider to be "the great American novel"? This is where the deeper dimension of the plot comes into play. Jay Gatsby, born to impoverished farmers in North Dakota and originally named Jimmy Gatz, is a dreamer and self-reinventor, to whom Daisy has come naively to symbolize the apex of all his desires and wonder.



A made-for-TV movie starring Toby Stephens as Gatsby appeared in 2000.

In seeking to possess Daisy as his own, Gatsby is seeking to reclaim the past, when they fell in love, and when he simultaneously committed himself to becoming part of the affluent world in which Daisy, unlike Gatsby, was born and raised. The tragedy of Gatsby's quest is that this is impossible, however ardently he maintains his hope and faith in the prospect. The narrator comes to suspect that reality is causing Gatsby some cognitive dissonance: "There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything."

There are so many elements of *The Great Gatsby* which are worth exploring, and, not surprisingly, academics have had a field day with it. Over



Leonardo DiCaprio played Gatsby in 2013.

the last century, there have come to be more scholarly articles published on the novel than there are pages in the book! The origin of the name *Gatsby* itself, for Fitzgerald, has been traced both to a novel by Joseph Conrad, of whom Fitzgerald was an admirer, and to a work by Rudyard Kipling called *The Story of the Gadsbys*. There are recognized, potent allusions in the novel to T.S. Eliot's long poem *The Waste Land*, to Keats's poem "Ode to a Nightingale," to a curious detail from the life of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, to Petronius's *Satyricon*, and to many, many other works. Give *The Great Gatsby* a true chance, and you may find, like me, that the book has retained its enduring status as a classic of American literature for the last hundred years for very good reason.

Learning English with My Son

Learning English has always been one of my goals, but it became even more meaningful when I started helping my son with his homework. At first, I was only trying to support him. He would bring home worksheets, vocabulary lists, and reading assignments, and I wanted to make sure he didn't struggle. But little by little, I realized I was learning too. Helping him became a learning journey for both of us.

Some days, we sit at the table and read together. He reads out loud, and I listen and follow the words. Then I read the same sentence, trying to copy his pronunciation.



Other times, we look at new words and guess their meanings. We even laugh when we make funny mistakes. Sometimes, I'm the student and he's the teacher. He corrects me kindly, and it makes me proud to see how confident he is with the language. I learn grammar rules while he does his exercises, and I've started to understand more just by being part of his study time.

This experience has brought us closer. We are not just doing homework, we are sharing time, learning, and growing together.

er. It also motivates me to study more, so I can continue helping him as school gets harder. Now, when he says, "Let's do English homework," I smile, because I know we're both becoming stronger in English, step by step.

Helping my son with his homework has taught me that learning is not just about books; it's about connection, support, and love. And sometimes, the best way to learn something is by learning it together.

Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani

LinkedIn at ARC

LinkedIn is a professional network where people can connect with potential employers. These connections can lead to interviews and new career opportunities.



LinkedIn Learning is a part of LinkedIn that offers online courses designed to help students develop job-ready skills. Courses are self-paced, so students can learn on their own schedule. By completing courses in areas like Microsoft 365, Adobe, data analytics, finance, marketing, and more, students can earn certificates and badges that they can add to their LinkedIn profile.

Professor Heidi Bennett has made a commendable contribution by establishing an initiative that provides every student at American River College with a compli-

mentary three-year membership to LinkedIn Learning. This membership grants access to over 3,000 courses in more than 35 languages, accompanied by personalized course recommendations based on individual interests and career aspirations.

This is a great way to gain new skills, prepare for future courses at ARC, and become more competitive in the job market. To get started, simply scan the QR code on the flyer provided and enter your Los Rios Single Sign On information. If you have any questions, you can visit El Centro in the UNITE Center, email arcelcentro@arc.losrios.edu, or visit Professor Heidi Bennett in the Business & Computer Science Lab.

Josiah Ponce
ARC Student Ambassador &
El Centro Peer Mentor

For more info, look at the next page!

Attention ARC
Students and
Employees

Unlock your **FREE 3-year LinkedIn Learning membership** using the QR code below - courtesy of Professor Heidi Bennett.

What's in it for you?

- Earn badges & certifications in tools like **Microsoft Office** and **Adobe** - display them proudly on your LinkedIn profile
- Learn at your own pace and boost your skills in **programming, generative AI, marketing, design, and more** - in over 35 languages!
- **No limits** - take as many courses as you'd like.



- Scan the QR code above to unlock your free membership to LinkedIn Learning



- Scan the QR code above to register for free courses and discover tips and tricks on making your profile stand out!

Questions?

Stop by  **El Centro** for more info



English Conversation Group

Fridays 5:00-6:00 | North Natomas library

Want to practice speaking English? Join our friendly group!

All languages and levels welcome. No registration. Meet new people and share experiences. This is not a class; it's more a social group for practicing.

Check "Events" for more locations and times at www.saclibrary.org.

Topics:

- Everyday life & things to do
- American culture
- News, pop culture
- Other...You help decide!

Groups are led by a trained facilitator. We hope to see you there!

Continued from page 1

people crafted in the last twenty years were going to collapse once again. Things got worse when the Taliban cops started searching for the people who had worked with the US Army.

My brothers who had worked with the US Army were no longer safe in Afghanistan. They decided to move to another country. Those were the most disheartening days for our family. Our house was going to scatter. My mother insisted that we should all move to other countries even though it was an arduous decision.

One day when my mother invited us for dinner, I was shocked to find out my elder brother Naseer had a flight to Canada the next day. I was not ready for this. I had many plans for them. The shopping, the farewell dinners, the gifts, and the nights we planned to spend together, all were left undone. They started collecting their things in their bags. While others were collecting papers and documents, I saw my nine-year old nephew Usman putting pebbles in his bag. When I asked, he said Canada may not have pebbles to play with. Usman did not want to lose his jar full of pebbles. He had a special love for his toys, especially for the pebbles.



My mother had a deep silence that day. The day my brother left the country was the day I realized my mother was human too. She can cry, and her face can also show emotions. Women are expected to be strong and emotionless in Afghan society. My mom, who always tried to fit in society's

mold, was shedding her coverings now. She shed all the tears that had been stuck inside her that day. I comforted her by giving her hope for a better future. No one knew that the future was going to be the worst.

After some months, my mother moved to Germany with my youngest brother, I moved to the USA, and our family was scattered even more. My mother was no longer the strong woman we had always seen. She had started to cry in front of us. She always talked about our house, the furniture, the blankets, the rugs, the toys and the pebbles that were left far away in Afghanistan.

Things changed with each passing day. My brother Naseer and his family got their Canadian identity cards. They were all set in the new place. They made them a new house, new furniture, new toys, and new friends. Although knowing the fact that these houses are not our real houses, my mother bought new rugs and blankets, and of course some toys to make sure everyone was comfortable in her house in Germany. My mother asked all of her children to visit her next summer. We all agreed. We made group calls every day and talked about visiting our mother.

It was a regular Sunday night Sep 29, 2024, when I made a group call to my family, but Naseer, my Canadian brother, did not answer his phone. He texted me that he was in the hospital because Usman had some stomach pain. He asked me not to tell my mother as it was just a normal pain. Everything will be okay, and he will call back as soon as he returns home. Everything was normal until I got a text from my brother later that night. He wrote about Usman having surgery. My heart missed a beat, my hands were getting cold, and I was shivering on a hot September night. I could not breathe in my room, so I walked out to the balcony. I sat on the floor and called my brother. He was trying to stay calm and said everything is going to be all right. I could not believe him, and was expecting something bad to happen, subconsciously. While he was talking on the phone, a doctor said something that

I could not hear on the phone. The hospital sounds, the siren of the ambulance, the doctor calling the nurses, I was hearing all of them running in the corridor. I fell unconscious. When I woke up, I was in the emergency room. The first thing I asked was, "How is Usman?" My husband said he is fine, but I wanted to talk to him. When I called my brother, he said that Usman is in a coma. Things were getting worse every passing hour. I could not talk to my mother, as I could not see her crying because of another tragedy. I could not talk to Usman also because he was not allowed to.

The next day I was in college when I received a call from my brother. He was talking about the student doctor getting arrested, the blood Usman had lost, and many other things. He sent me a video also, where Usman is eating a popsicle, waving his hand and calling my name, but nothing could comfort me that day. My mind was alarming me for something else, and then my brother told me about another surgery Usman was going to have. I was scared to death. Those days were dreadful; we all were mentally numbed. We all had life and responsibilities that did not allow us to mourn the whole day. I also had to follow my regular routine, do home chores, go to college, and tell bedtime stories to my kids, but something was missing those days. Something was quenching my heart the whole day. I rarely talked to my mother those days, as I couldn't stand to see her aging years in a week.

Finally, the day my mind was anxious about arrived. We got the news that destroyed my whole world. Usman passed away. Life ended, not only for Usman, but for all of us. I heard my mother crying once again. My brother was all alone in a distant country. He has to manage his fainted wife, manage

phone calls, and take care of his two daughters. I was mentally frozen those days. Seeing my kind brother suffering those days was the worst thing I had in my life. I could not even cry for my Usman. My brother was collecting Usman's clothes and shoes. Those muddy clothes, pebbles in one pocket and pennies in the other were the only things the hospital staff handed my brother. They gave us a pale body without a soul, and we couldn't do anything. That was not our country. We knew nothing



about accusing someone of death. Naseer was all alone in Canada. He buried Usman all alone. Usman has found relief after going through so much agony. My mother says, "Usman has turned into a bird in heaven; I am not worried about him anymore. I am worried about Naseer, he has to live a long life without Usman. Naseer has to suffer every day."

We had planned to visit my mother in Germany, but now we have to visit Naseer in Canada. I wonder

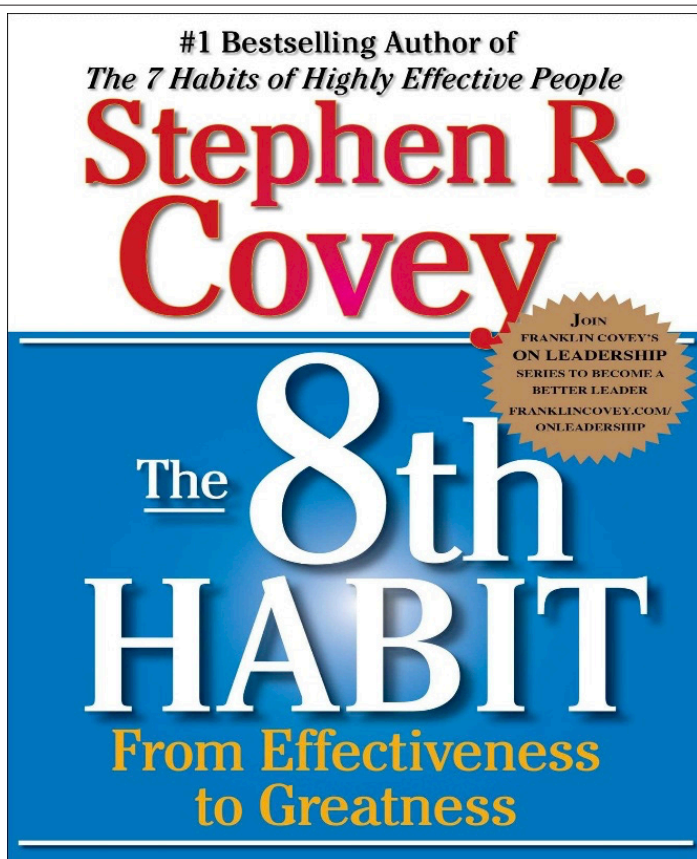
how it will be to stay in their house without Usman. How can he pass away? He was too young to die. He had castles to make, stories to tell: the imaginary stories only I believed. We leave our country hoping for good, but we don't know anything about the future. Once we move to another country, we cannot return anymore. We have to endure everything else and stay in an immigrant country forever. We cannot decide between the two countries and are stuck in the air. My mother, who always worried about our scattered house, now has to mourn scattered graves. I wish it were a dream and we could all wake up in Afghanistan, at my mother's house, everyone happy and laughing with Usman playing with pebbles all around the house.

Neelam Hakimi - ESL 325
Narrative Essay

Book Review

The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness

By Stephen R. Covey (2004)



As a proud fellowship member of the Morning Star Leadership Institute since 2009, I was first introduced to [*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*](#), a book that laid the foundation for my personal and professional growth. Those seven habits gave me structure, focus, and confidence. But when I later read [*Stephen R. Covey's*](#) powerful follow-up, *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*, it awakened something deeper in me.

The eighth habit is "Find your voice

and inspire others to find theirs." Reading this felt like a personal call to action. It's not just a motivational phrase; it's a framework for living with purpose. Covey challenges us to discover our unique voice where our talents, passions, conscience, and the needs of the world meet, and to help others do the same. That message resonated deeply with me.

This book came into my life when I was striving to build a stronger, more meaningful path not only for myself but for those I support through my work and leadership. It gave me the tools and courage to stand tall in my goals and continually improve my skills for a better life. I have used its lessons every day since, in both subtle decisions and major life choices.

To anyone reading this newsletter, I highly recommend reading *The 8th Habit* at least once. It's not just for leaders in title, but for anyone who wants to live with intention, integrity, and impact. It helped me grow beyond effectiveness and into a space of personal greatness and I believe it can do the same for you.

Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi

Volunteer Opportunity



Help for Refugee Children



Starting Point is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting newly arrived refugee children in the greater Sacramento area.

The organization strives to give them a warm welcome by providing basic necessities and programs as they begin their new lives in the U.S. They do things like meet refugee families with children at the airport, give them welcome baskets, and provide basic ESL and computer lessons, and they have even started a very popular soccer team for the kids. Visit the website and click on [REQUEST HELP](https://www.startingpointworld.com/).

Starting Point is directed by Vickee Moy, a professor of English as a Second Language in Sacramento. She launched Starting Point in June 2017 after being deeply touched by her refugee students' stories about their lives in their native countries and about their new lives in the U.S. Starting Point is one way she hopes to honor and

remember their incredible stories and beautiful lessons about perseverance, strength, hope, and humanity.

As a child of immigrants, Vickee feels a connection with new arrivals and is passionate about helping them begin successful lives in their new country. Along with her husband and three sons, she is excited to reach out to this growing community of newcomers.

<https://www.startingpointworld.com/>

Want to Help?

There are several ways that you can help Starting Point to help children. You can put together a welcome basket, assemble a backpack with supplies, help buy shoes, assist with lessons and program development for SPARK (Summer Program for Arts, Recreation and Knowledge), or even coach and support a soccer team!

Donations to Starting Point are tax deductible. Please visit the [Starting Point Volunteer](https://www.startingpointworld.com/) Page for more information.

Pathway to Permanent Opportunity: A Training Worth Attending

On April 16, 2025, I attended a training session organized by the [Career and Pathways](#) department at American River College. The training was both interesting and very practical. It was specifically designed to support and guide student employees who are hoping to secure long-term, permanent employment at American River College or at any of the Los Rios colleges.



During the session, the trainers shared valuable insights on the key skills and strategies needed to prepare for interviews and successfully pursue permanent job opportunities within the Los Rios system. Their advice felt very relatable and hands-on, making it easy to connect the information to real career goals.

One of the parts that stood out most for me was hearing from three newly-hired permanent staff members at ARC. Each of them had started as a student at ARC, then worked as a student employee across different departments, gaining practical work experience. Eventually, they applied for permanent positions, went through the hiring process, and officially joined ARC's team. It was inspiring to hear their stories; they were once exactly where we are now.

Another highlight was the interactive Q&A segment. Throughout the presentation, questions were asked from a student employee's perspec-

tive, and each of the three speakers shared honest, real-world answers based on their own experiences. It gave the audience a chance to hear specific tips and strategies about navigating the journey from student worker to permanent staff member. Overall, I found this training incredibly helpful, especially for student employees currently working at any of the Los Rios colleges who are planning to apply for permanent roles in the future.

If you're someone looking for support, advice, or training around employment opportunities, I highly recommend visiting the [ARC Career and Pathways](#) department. You can ask questions, get guidance, and even sign up for the next "Pathway to Permanent Opportunity" training session when it becomes available.



Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi

Image Credits:

1. <https://ccgga.org/job-opportunities/>
2. <https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-image-job-career-work-opportunity-words-road-signs-colorful-arrows-pointing-to-new-opportunities-to-advance-your-image31918731>

Movie Review

Police On Duty



As someone from a country where standing up can be dangerous, I found myself emotionally invested. There were moments in the film that reminded me of the brave women and men back home who speak up despite the threats. The officer's determination, his pain, and his refusal to give up even though he lost his family and loved ones while doing his duty to be bought or broken all hit close to home. I felt seen.

What I appreciated most was how *Police on Duty* didn't paint justice as something easy or perfect. It showed the emotional toll, the loneliness, and the frustration that comes when you are the only one speaking the truth. But it also showed strength, the kind of strength that comes from believing in something bigger than yourself.

I watched this movie during a time when I needed that reminder that even when systems fail us, even when our voices feel small, courage still matters. And sometimes, stories like these help us keep going.

I deeply recommend *Police on Duty* to anyone who comes from a place where justice has been silenced. Watch it not just as a film, but as a story of resistance, hope, and the power of staying true to what is right. For me, it wasn't just a movie; it was a mirror and a message.

Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi

I recently watched the Indian movie *Police on Duty*, and to be honest, it left a deep impression on me not just as a movie lover, but as an Afghan woman who has lived through systems where justice feels far away and power often speaks louder than truth.

Police On Duty tells the story of an honest police officer who refuses to stay silent in a world full of corruption and fear. What drew me in was not just the action or the strong performance of the lead character, but the way it reflects real struggles I have seen and even faced in my own life. Watching someone fight for justice, knowing the risks, yet refusing to give up--that felt so familiar.



Scan QR Code

Zoom Hours

Thursday

11:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Friday

8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

ESL Center Spring 2025

On Campus in the LRC

Monday	9:00 to 4:45
Tuesday	9:00 to 4:45
Wednesday	9:00 to 4:45
Thursday	9:00 to 4:45
Friday	Closed

The ESL Center helps all multilingual students with their classes and questions. We speak Ukrainian, Farsi, Dari, Pashto, Russian, Spanish, and more. Come see us!



Ask
Questions

Get
Help

Rap Music Review



In our previous conversation about *Rap Viet Season 2*, I mentioned how much I enjoyed that season. Now, I'd like to share my thoughts on *Rap Viet Season 4*, which aired in 2024. The music industry has evolved beyond expectations, and my love for rap music has grown stronger than ever.



For me, *Rap Viet Season 1* remains the most memorable and my favorite. However, Season 2 taught me valuable lessons about life and the people around us. Season 4, on the other hand, brought a spectacular fusion of rap and folk music, which initially seemed unusual but was executed brilliantly by a talented rapper.

Tieu Minh Phung, a singer renowned for his folk music, made a surprising appearance on *Rap Viet*. Known for his success in various country and folk music contests, his initial performance of a short folk song left everyone thinking he was in the wrong place. However, he soon began singing folk lyrics over a rap melody, and the entire studio



erupted in excitement. The judges and trainers were thrilled and eager to have him on their teams.

Although Tieu Minh Phung didn't make it to the final stage, he stood out as an exceptional con-



testant admired by many audiences. He managed to bridge the gap between the older and younger generations with his music. His participation in *Rap Viet* significantly boosted his popularity in Vietnam, and I admire him for being the first artist to bring different generations closer together through his innovative musical style.

Enjoy the folk-rap music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWvmufw_PZc

Parrot Staff Writer: Snow Le

Have a tooth problem?

Need help?

No dental insurance?

Here are some resources:

WellSpace Health: 916-737-5555

One Community Health: 916-443-3299

Refugee Health Clinic: 916-874-9227

Elica Health Centers: 855-354-2242

California Northstate University: 916-686-8914 (Dentistry school)

Sacramento District dental Society: 916-446-1211

Emergency Dental Sacramento: 916-318-0911 (open on week-ends and accept walk-ins).

Some of these places may require a fee. Call for information about cost.

You can also look on <https://cityhub.findhelp.com/> with your zip code.



Explore California

Lake Tahoe: January's Magic



Last January, my family surprised me with an afternoon trip to Lake Tahoe for my birthday, giving me the perfect opportunity to enjoy the scenery and capture some memorable photos. It had been snowing all week, so we waited patiently for a clear day to make the most of our outing. Fortunately, the weather and the lake exceeded our expectations.

During our drive, we stopped at a picturesque vista point in Incline Village, which offered breathtaking views of the lake. From this vantage point, I managed to capture the stunning scene in the photo above. As I was taking pictures, a low fog began to roll in, adding an extra layer of drama and mood to the already breathtaking landscape. The fog's gentle touch transformed the scene into something even more enchanting, showcasing Lake Tahoe's unique beauty.

I'm accustomed to visiting Lake Tahoe during the summer months, so witnessing its beauty in the winter was a truly mesmerizing experience. Given my limited experience photographing snow, I was particularly struck by how the winter landscape can elevate even the most mundane scenes into something magical. The experience has inspired me to capture more winter scenes in the future, and I'm excited to explore the creative possibilities that come with photographing in the snow.

Overall, the trip was a wonderful celebration of my birthday, and I'm grateful to my family for planning such a special outing. Lake Tahoe's beauty is truly timeless, and I feel fortunate to have experienced it in a new way.

By Manny

The Secret Code of Plastic



#1 Plastic: Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET)

It is the most frequently used in water and beverage bottles, food jars and containers. Plastic #1 is usually clear in color, and it is not intended for multiple uses.

*While some PET products are microwave-safe, it is best to avoid them due to potential chemical leaching.

#2 Plastic: High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE)

It is one of the safest sorts of plastic and can be re-used and recycled up to 10 times.



* It can be considered microwave-safe, but has less heat tolerance than PP or #5. It can be used to contain hot food.

#3 Plastic: Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)

It is not going to be among safe recycling codes, is very dangerous, and one of the least recyclable types of plastic.



* It is not a microwave-safe product.

#4 Plastic: Low-Density Polyethylene (LDPE)

It is believed to be rather safe to use, but it is not environmentally friendly as only a small percent of LDPE 4 plastic is recycled. LDPE can be changed then in lumber and floor tiles.

* It is considered microwave-safe, but is not recommended for microwave use.

#5 Plastic: Polypropylene (PP)

It is the second-most widely produced plastic which is light, heat resistant, and sturdy. PP is applied to various packaging. It can be reused but rarely recycled.

* It is considered microwave-safe, but check for the microwave-safe sign.

#6 Plastic: Polystyrene (PS/Styrofoam)

It is hard to recycle #6 Plastic.



* It is not a microwave-safe product.

#7 Plastic: Other (PC)

This includes new plastics, bioplastic, and items composed of different types of plastic. This recycling logo also stands for polycarbonate (PC), which contains highly dangerous BPA (Bisphenol A). Try to avoid products with the PC label.

*** Remember that recycle symbol 2, 4, and 5 are relatively safe to use. Still, try not to heat them and do not put them into a microwave even if they are microwave-safe. Products with the #3 plastic recycling number, as well as with recycling codes 6 and 7, must be rarely used, especially with food and drinks. #1 Plastic isn't very bad, but you must store it in a cool environment, and it shouldn't be reused.

Learn more about how to reuse and recycle these plastics at YesStraw.com.

Podcast Review

Speak English with Tiffani



Today I want to tell you about a podcast that has really helped me with my English, especially with speaking and listening. It's called [Speak English with Tiffani](#), and honestly, it feels like you're just talking to a cool American friend who wants you to do your best.

The host, Tiffani, is an English teacher with a big smile and a lot of good energy. She speaks clearly (but not too slowly) and explains things in a way that makes sense even if your English is still growing. She talks about real-life topics like going to the store, talking about your job, chatting with friends, and answering questions in conversations. It's not like a boring textbook. It's more like someone saying, "Here's how we really say it in the U.S."

One thing I really love is that she teaches how to think in English, not just memorize words. That's a big deal. She also teaches you how to give long, smart answers. For example, if someone asks you, "What do you do on weekends?", she helps you answer with more than just "I relax." She shows how to add details and make it sound more natural, like a real conversation.

Tiffani also shares little stories about her life and sometimes about her students, and she gives you tips on staying motivated. You'll feel like she's cheering for you. And it's not just English, she teaches confidence too. When I listen to her, I feel like, "Yeah, I can do this!"

Here's the best part: you can listen anywhere! While walking, cleaning, cooking, waiting for the bus, you name it. The episodes are not too long, but they're packed with good stuff. I like to repeat the words she says and practice out loud.

So, if you want to practice listening to an American accent, learn how to actually talk to people, and have a good time while you're at it, give Tiffani a listen.

Trust me, you'll smile, you'll learn, and your English will level up.

Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani

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Arabic Proverb

One of the most well-known American proverbs is “Actions speak louder than words.” It’s simple, powerful, and used all the time. But did you know that classical Arabic has a very similar proverb? It’s “الأفعال أبلغ من الأقوال” (*al-af’āl ablagh min al-aqwāl*), which literally means “Actions are more eloquent than words.” Pretty cool, right? Two different languages, two different cultures, but the same exact wisdom. That’s the beauty of proverbs: they connect us, even across continents.

So, what does this saying actually mean? It means that talking is easy, but doing something, *taking action*, is what really matters. You can say you’re going to help, study, fix things, change the world; but if you don’t do anything, your words are just air. People trust what you do, not what you promise. It’s like saying, “I’ll make dinner tonight,” but then you just order pizza and pretend it was your idea all along.

Let’s take a funny example: Imagine your classmate stands up and says, “This semester, I’m going to study hard, exercise every morning, and get straight A’s!” Every-

one claps. But the next day, you find them sleeping in class, eating chips for breakfast, and asking you for your homework. That’s a classic case of words louder than actions, and it’s not very impressive. In both English and Arabic, we’d say, “Let your actions do the talking.”

This proverb is important not just for school but for life. Whether you’re learning

English, applying for a job, or making friends, your behavior matters more than big talk. People remember how you treat them, what you actually do, and how you show up. You don’t need to talk like a superhero, just act like a good human.

So next time you’re tempted to make a big speech about your goals, remember

the American and Arabic advice: talk less, do more, because actions have their own voice.

**ACTIONS
SPEAK
LOUDER
THAN WORDS**

Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani

Out of the Cage

Parent to Parent Program at ARC

Being a student and parent brings unique challenges that only another parent truly understands.

At American River College, a special resource called Parent to Parent (P2P), in partnership with the Mentor Collective, enhances the students' experience by connecting CalWORKs students with a mentor from within the program. Students are paired with someone invested in their success—a person ready to listen, inspire, help navigate challenges, and recognize opportunities.

Additionally, P2P mentors serve as a critical part of a student's success team by serving as a proxy for your dedicated counselors and the CalWORKs program. Mentor Collective's online platform provides training and resources for students' mentors and makes it easy for mentors and mentees to connect.

To enroll in P2P, scan the QR code or call: (916) 484-8059



Mentee Registration



QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

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Please let us know what we can do to improve *The Parrot*. We appreciate any and all feedback you are willing to give us. Contact us at TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu.

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