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American River College

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The Parrot



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



**ABOVE THE FOG:
A WINTER SUNSET IN JACKSON,
CALIFORNIA**

BY MANNY, PARROT STAFF WRITER

For more than three weeks, the Sacramento Valley disappeared.

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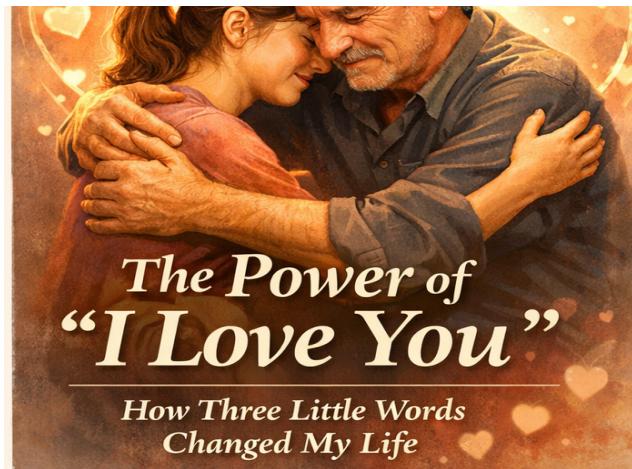
**Got a Funny ESL Story? Pick up ARC Gifts!
See page 2 for details.**

LOVE, FINALLY SPOKEN

BY SVITLANA TSARUK, ESL 325

My experience of learning to say "I love you" taught me that expressing emotions through words can heal relationships and bring people closer together.

I was born in a small village, in a family of six children. Our house was always busy, noisy, and full of work. My father worked long hours outside, and my mother took care of the younger children, the



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Got a Funny ESL Story? Pick up ARC Gifts!

The Parrot wants to hear from **YOU**—students, staff, faculty, and administrators!

Tell us about a funny or memorable moment you've had while learning or teaching English.

Send your story to TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu.



As a BIG thank-you, the first 2 people will receive a bag full of ARC swag, complete with:

- a stylish lunch bag
- a portable speaker
- sunglasses
- campus goodies

Courtesy of the ARC Unite Center. Don't miss your chance to share a laugh and grab some cool gifts!



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.

Need help?
esl-assessment@arc.losrios.edu



MY DREAMS IN LIFE

BY NABILA SULTANI, ESL 47

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY

Everyone in the world has dreams that give life meaning and hope for the future. Some people dream about careers, and others dream about family and helping others. My dreams come from my love for my family and my desire to help people. My dreams are to be a good mother, a helpful wife, and a professional midwife.

First, being a good mother is a big responsibility. I want to raise my children with love, patience, and kindness. I want to teach my children good manners and strong values. A good mother always listens to her

children. I want my children to feel safe when they talk to me. I also want to help my children with their homework and schoolwork. Education is essential for their future. I want to guide them when they make mistakes. I want to support them in good and bad times. A good mother is always there for her children. When my children are happy, I feel happy and successful. This dream is very important to my life.

Second, being a helpful wife is very important. Marriage is built on love, respect, and teamwork. I want to support my husband in every part of our lives. I want to stand next to him in good times and hard times. A helpful wife listens to and understands her partner. I want to help my husband reach his

goals and dreams. I also want to create a peaceful and happy home. When there is peace in the home, everyone feels comfortable. I want to take care of my family with patience and respect. I believe a strong marriage is built with cooperation, and when my husband feels supported, he becomes stronger. This dream helps me become a better person every day.



Third, becoming a midwife is one of my most important dreams. A midwife helps mothers during pregnancy and childbirth. This job is very important and very meaningful. I want to help women bring healthy babies into the world. I want to support mothers during one of the most important moments of their lives. Becoming a midwife requires education and hard work. I am ready to study and work hard for this dream. I want to learn medical skills and help save lives. I also want to help immigrant women who may not understand the hospital with every patient. When I help a mother and her baby, I will feel proud. This dream gives my life a strong purpose.

Finally, my three dreams are to be a good mother, a helpful wife, and a successful midwife. These dreams motivate me to work hard, study, and be a kind and responsible person.

DANCING ZUMBA

BY ZINAIDA KARASTOIAN, ESL 47

Have you ever tried a workout that feels more like a party than exercise? That's why I love Zumba. Zumba is a dance workout with fast music and fun moves. I started doing Zumba one year ago, and now I do it almost every week. My favorite hobby is dancing Zumba because it helps me stay healthy, makes me feel good, and lets me meet new people.



First of all, Zumba helps me stay healthy, strong, and full of energy. In every class, I move my whole body, my arms, legs, core, and my face from smiling so much. Zumba is a great cardio workout, which helps me burn calories and stay in shape. Sometimes, I feel lazy or tired, but when I start dancing, I get more energy. For me, Zumba is better than just walking or running because the music is fun and fast. It also helps improve my balance, coordination, and flexibility. I don't feel like I'm exercising; I feel like I'm dancing at a party. Zumba is never boring because the music changes and the routines are always fun. Indeed, Zumba is a great way to stay healthy and full of energy.

Next, Zumba improves my mental and emotional health. After a long or stressful day, I sometimes feel tired or even a little sad. But as soon as I hear the upbeat music and start dancing, my mood completely changes. The fast music and positive ener-

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gy help me forget my worries and just enjoy the moment. Everyone in the class is dancing and enjoying themselves. Exercise makes the brain release happy chemicals, so I feel good when I dance. I always leave class feeling lighter and more confident. Zumba helps me stay positive, even when I have a bad day. In my opinion, Zumba is like medicine for my mind, so it helps me feel calm and strong.

Finally, Zumba helps me make new friends and feel part of a community. In my class, there are people of all ages. Some are good dancers, and some are beginners, but we all dance together and have fun. Everyone was kind and supportive, which made me feel comfortable. I also get to meet people from different cultures, which helps me learn new things and improve my English speaking. Sometimes we meet outside of class for coffee or lunch. We shared stories and gave each other support. I never expected a fitness class to bring so many wonderful people into my life. In short, Zumba has given me more than just a healthy body; it has given me real friendships.

In conclusion, dancing Zumba is my favorite hobby because it keeps me physically healthy, improves my mood, and helps me build strong social connections. If you want to feel happier, healthier, and more connected, I recommend trying Zumba class.

Places That Help Immigrants in Sacramento

BY Liliia Kholod, ESL

Every immigrant needs places that make them feel safe, comfortable, and supported. Immigrants often come from countries where life is difficult or unsafe, and they look for environments that give them peace and stability. These places in Sacramento help immigrants, including me, feel relaxed, protected, and supported. I feel gratitude for home, church, and Folsom Lake, which help many immigrants adjust to their new lives.

First, home is a place where immigrants feel the most safe and comfortable. After long and stressful days, immigrants can rest, spend time with their families, and feel a sense of belonging. At home, immigrants can think about their problems, goals, and dreams as they start a new life. The home supports immigrants on hard days and gives emotional strength. Indeed, home is the most important place that provides immigrants with comfort, relaxation, and a feeling of safety.

Secondly, church is another important place that gives immigrants support and comfort. Many immigrants feel calm and peaceful when they attend church services. They can pray, stay connected to their faith, and find guidance during difficult times. People at church are kind, welcoming, and often help immigrants feel less alone in a new country.

Church communities teach important values such as honesty, respect, and courage, which help immigrants grow stronger. Indeed, church is a place where immigrants can always find support, hope, and community.

Thirdly, Folsom Lake is a place where immigrants can relax and feel free in Sacramento. Nature helps immigrants release stress and forget their worries. The sound of the water, the fresh air, and the peaceful views help immigrants feel happier and healthier. At the lake, immigrants can think clearly about their plans and challenges while enjoying the beauty of nature. Indeed, the lake helps immigrants feel calm, free, and emotionally balanced in their new environment.

In conclusion, homes, churches, and places like Folsom Lake are three places in Sacramento that give immigrants strong support, comfort, and peace. Each of these places helps immigrants feel safe, happy, and welcomed as they build their new lives. These places protect immigrants, make life easier during difficult situations, and help them feel at home in a new country.

OPINION ESSAY



Special Places for Fun in Sacramento

BY ANNA KHAMARDIUK, ESL 47

Have you ever felt that some places make you happier? Sacramento is full of beautiful places to relax, have fun, and spend time with your family. These places make me happier and help me relax as a mother, housewife, and student. In this essay I want to share with you four places where I spend time with my family and where I enjoy my vacation: Gibson Ranch Park, Folsom Lake, my living room, and Green Café.

Frist, Gibson Ranch Park is my favorite place to have fun with my family and friends. For instance, last weekend, my son was fishing with my husband, and my daughter was feeding the ducks in a small lake. Also, my children love to look at the horses; there are many beautiful horses of different breeds. I like walking with friends and families around the park. There is a beautiful nature around especially the lake. I like sitting on the bench and watching the swimming ducks.

Also, I like celebrating holidays there, for example, birthdays of my friends or family members. We love to do BBQ and enjoy time with each other. Sometimes I like watching the flowers, trees, and listening to birds singing. My kids also like this park because this park has a playground. There is a lot of different animals: horses, ducks, and goats, so it's very interesting.

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In conclusion, we have much fun together with my family and friends at Gibson Ranch Park.

Second, Folsom Lake is my special place for fun. I like to listen to the sounds of water and birds, so it's a very peaceful place. Also, I like to feel sand under my feet. For example, my children love to build sand castles and spray water guns at each other. When I feel sand on my feet, it does some kind of foot massage for me. I love feeling sun on my body and the warm breeze that blows. When I look to the water, I forget about my worries and problems. Also, I like to lay and sunbathe near the water and talk with my family and friends. All my family and friends like swimming, and in the summer, we get together and go swimming at Folsom Lake. Especially my children like this place because it has a lot of space to play games and run. In conclusion, it's a good place when you want to have fun with family, and if you like swimming.

Next, my living room is the best place to spend time and have fun with my family and friends. It is a peaceful and quite place where we can talk with each other and share some news. For instance, every Friday evening, we watch a movie and eat popcorn; this is our favorite tradition. When



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we get together at the big table for lunch or dinner, all time we have fun and laugh. I make my living room cozy with lots of colorful pillows on the sofa and in light mint colors. In addition, my living room is the place where I decorate for holidays and different events. We like to lay on the sofa and watch movies or cartoons with children, So, it's our rest after a long day. Sometimes we like to drink tea with desserts and enjoy talking with my loved ones. Also, my children and my friend's children like playing in the playing room. My living room is where I feel comfortable and safe. I like to get together with our friends and play table games or listen to music. In conclusion, my living room is the best place where we get together with family and friends and have fun.

Lastly, the Green Café, in Sacramento my favorite special place to spend time with family or alone. I go there when I want to be alone, study, or just have a cup of coffee. This café has a welcoming atmosphere and excellent service and design. The

café has large portions and beautiful presentation of dishes. The owners of the café are Ukrainian, so they make traditional Ukrainian dishes there. For example, dumplings, pancakes with sweet and cherries, and they bake a delicious Napoleon Cake. In addition, when I want to relax along, I take a book, order a cappuccino with my favorite dessert, and distract myself from all my problems. They also have a bookshelf and anyone can read and enjoy Ukrainian or English Literature. Sometimes I meet with my friends or invite my husband for a cup of coffee to discuss the latest news. I feel cozy and warm in this café.

Indeed, special places where I have fun with friends and family on the weekend in Sacramento are Gibson Ranch, Folsom Lake, my living room, and the Green Café. These places make me feel happy, comfortable, and I get energy from these places.



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

BY IRYNA KOVALENKO, ESL 315

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Have you ever thought about what authors want to show you the most: beautiful images, their writing skills, or someone's life troubles... "The Paper Menagerie" is a story about one Chinese-American boy, his Chinese mom, and magic origami animals. In "Montreal 1962" we see an Indian woman, who is washing her husband's turban and thinking about how her life changed after immigration. "The Paper Menagerie" and "Montreal 1962" are similar in symbolism and the theme of immigration but differ in setting.

The first similarity between both stories is symbolism. In "The Paper Menagerie," Jack's mother made paper animals for him, and then, they became alive: "She breathed into her paper animals, so they shared her breath, and thus moved with her life." Doing this, she passed on her love and culture to him. Similar to "The Paper Menagerie," "Montreal 1962" also has symbolism. It's a turban. In this reading, an Indian woman puts her husband's red turban on a bed and compares it with a pool of blood that her people spilled defending their religion and beliefs: "I unfurled the gauzy scarlet on our bed, and it seemed as though I poured a pool of sainted blood of all the Sikh." Both of these examples show figurative language - symbolism. In "The Paper Menagerie" it is origami - the symbol of a mother's life and love. In "Montreal 1962" it is a turban - the symbol of Sikh blood and culture.

The second similarity is the theme of immigration. In "The Paper Menagerie," Jack's mother tells him how she felt about her immigration to America: "In the suburbs of Connecticut, I was lonely." In the same manner in "Montreal 1962," we can see the same theme. The Sikh woman is disappointed because of the discrimination in Canada, where they moved to find a better life: "This was not how they described emigration to Canada," and "You must be reborn white-skinned - and clean shaven to show

it - to survive." Both of these examples reveal the theme of immigration and obstacles that immigrants face in a new country. In "The Paper Menagerie," Jack's mother moved from China to America because it was the only hope for her to survive and have a good life. Similar to "The Paper Menagerie," in "Montreal 1962" the Sikh family from India moved to Canada to have more opportunities and freedom. Both were disappointed and didn't get what they wanted.

Even though both stories are similar in symbolism and theme, they differ in setting. In "The Paper Menagerie" the action is happening in Connecticut, U.S. In 1973, Jack's father took his mom to America because he wanted to help her: "He flew back to Connecticut and began to apply for the papers for her to come to him." However, in "Montreal 1962," the story takes place in Montreal, Canada in 1962, earlier than in "The Paper Menagerie." When the woman washed all the turbans, she started to tie each of them on a curtain rod: "From the window over my head came the sounds of a Montreal afternoon..." From the title of the story, we can see the year "1962." Even though both stories differ in setting, the characters face the same problems with discrimination. Different places, different years, but the same unpleasant experience.

It is important to make these comparisons because you can better understand the main points of what the authors want to show you the most. Feelings: they want you to feel the story in the same way they feel. They want you to feel them through their readings. They want to connect with you and encourage you: "You are not alone."

CALM FOR A WHILE

BY NEVEEN DABABNEH, ESL 350

POETRY

My bed of comfort and place of my dreams, stillness of the
night in my days.

You extend your arms every night, as if you were a cuddle
for my sad and joys.

My head rests on your pillow, like a player scores a goal in
the basketball net.

You cuddle my body like my mother when she breastfed
me.

When the days make me tired, I return to you like one loses
the game.

You listen to my silence and dive me into a dream, as if you
were an artist lost in his painting.

My beloved bed, with me in my sleep,
you hide me when my worries increase.

When night comes, I walk heavily,
I see you to my heart as a faithful shadow,
So, I thank my Lord for every night,
I see you in it, calm for a while.

OPINION ESSAY

Lucky - Every Single Day

BY Tetiana Kamenenko, ESL

Thanksgiving is a time to think about the blessings in our lives. It is important to remember people, places, and opportunities that make us feel thankful. I am thankful for my sister Alina, my peaceful home, and the opportunity to study in the United States.

First, I am thankful for my sister Alina. She is a kind and supportive person. She always listens to me and understands my feelings. We have a close relationship, and she helps me when life is difficult. When I moved to the United States, she gave me advice and encouraged me. She always checks if I am doing well. She calls me when I feel lonely, and it makes me happy. She cares about my problems and gives me simple solutions. I feel safe and calm when I talk to her. Because of her support, I feel strong every day. Alina is a very special person in my life.

Second, I am thankful for my home because it is a peaceful and safe place where I can rest after a long and stressful day. My home always feels warm and comfortable, and it helps me relax. I enjoy spending quiet evenings there with a cup of cocoa. My home gives me a feeling of protection and calm. It is also a place where I can think clearly and feel like myself. I love the soft light, the clean space, and the peaceful atmosphere. Being at home helps me recharge my energy. I feel happy when I am there, and it always welcomes me with comfort. My home is truly one of



THE GRATEFUL GULL

the most important blessings in my life.

Last of all, I am thankful for the opportunity to study in the United States. This opportunity opened a new chapter in my life. I can learn English and improve my skills every day. Studying at ARC gives me confidence and hope for a better future. I also meet new classmates who are friendly. Every class helps me grow and understand more about language. I learn not only language, but also culture and communication. This opportunity makes me feel proud of myself. It is a chance to build a new life and follow my dreams. I am truly grateful for this experience because it gives me strength and a brighter future.



In conclusion, my sister Alina, my peaceful home, and my chance to study in the United States are beautiful blessings in my life. They fill my heart with gratitude

and hope, and they remind me how lucky I am every single day.

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](#).

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](#) Page for more information.

OPINION ESSAY

BEING GRATEFUL IS GREAT!

BY LIUDMYLA PESHKO, ESL 47

"Give thanks for everything", says the Holy Bible. It is not easy to be thankful for life's difficulties. It is more pleasant to say thanks for good things. Gratitude helps us find and count blessings in life. I am really grateful to God for several blessings in my life, and they give me strength.

First of all, my bike is a blessing for me, and I am very grateful to God that my bike gives me strength. As a child, I had a small tricycle. Later, my parents gave me a big bicycle, and I learned to ride it for a long time. It was great! My bicycle is very helpful for me, and I like it. For instance, when I pedal bike, I feel so happy. Moreover, riding bike is a very good exercise for my body. In addition, my bike is very comfortable. When I ride, I have fresh air and wonderful views of nature. I always get more energy when I pedal a bike. For example, I can listen to music and meet other people. Moreover, I feel like a child when I pedal a bike. In sum, I am very thankful to God for my bike, and it makes me strong.

Next, I am so thankful to God that I can go hiking, and it gives me strength. Nowadays, people walk very little. But it is vain because movement is life. Hiking is a long walk outside the city, and it has many advantages for me. Hiking makes me strong. For example, it is good exercise. Moreover, hiking develops endurance. In addition, it gives me inner strength. I always see new pleasing and beautiful views when I go hiking. When I go hiking, I always

use fresh air, and it is helpful for my body. Hiking recharges me. I often feel so tired but very strong when I go hiking. In short, hiking gives me strength, and I am grateful to God for this blessing.

Last of all, I am thankful to God for having my wonderful church, and it is a big blessing that makes me strong. The blessing that makes me strong. The church helps people to become like Christ. In the church, people read the Bible, pray for each other, sing songs of praise, worship God and thank God for blessings. Church is my amazing and important place because it also gives me strength. For instance, when I go to church, I listen to wonderful songs. Moreover, church inspires me to love other people. In addition, it is a good place, and I feel strength inside me when I visit my church. Church is an amazing place for all my family. For instance, my kids have a nice time to learn the Bible, and it is very important. In church, I met with Jesus Christ. Indeed, church is a big blessing for me, and it gives me strength.



In conclusion, my favorite bike, my helpful hiking, and my church are blessings for me, and they all give me strength, so I am very grateful to God for them. Life's routine takes a lot of strength, and I am happy that I have some blessings that make me strong. Gratitude fills the heart and warms the soul. Gratitude is a good habit. Gratitude is an ability to find and give thanks for blessings. Being grateful is great!



MY FAVORITE HOBBIES

BY ANDREY SELVASYUK, ESL 47

Most people have hobbies. Hobbies give people the opportunity to spend their free time in a much more interesting and useful way. Many people even have three or more hobbies. Hobbies can range from cooking to collecting vintage cars. Have you ever wondered how many different hobbies people have? I'm sure they are all interesting and worthy of respect. But for many important reasons, my favorite hobbies are fishing, collecting stamps, and playing sports.

First of all, it's fishing. Fishing is one way to enjoy peace and tranquility. What could be better

than sitting with a fishing rod on the shore of a lake after a hard week? You can listen to the birds singing and breathe fresh air. For example, at dawn, you can hear the Western Bluebird singing and also enjoy a stunning sunrise. Moreover, this is a good way to think about plans of the future. And, of course, you always have a dream of catching a huge fish. I also love to come fishing with my family and enjoy a fabulous picnic. In short, fishing is one of my awesome hobbies, because it is a good opportunity to relax, spend an amazing time with family, and have a chance to catch a huge fish!

Second, stamp collecting is a significant hobby for me. My uncle gave me my first album with postage stamps when I was still a child. Although a postage stamp is just a way to pay for sending letters, many people collect them. You might think that



collecting stamps is a simple waste of time. However, there are some interesting features. For instance, each postage stamp has its own story. When you collect a stamp collection, you begin to learn what event these stamps were issued for. In addition, blank postage stamps are especially valuable. When I replenish my collection with the missing stamp, I rejoice like a child. In brief, I like my wonderful

hobby because it is interesting, and I have been collecting stamps since I was a child.

Last of all, the best hobby for me is playing sports. I like exercise because it is a good way to get healthy and energized for the whole day.

Exercise helps me lose weight. For example, after training, I feel light throughout my body. During training, my body becomes beautiful and toned. Also, exercise helps me reduce my stress levels. When I ride a bike, I forget about everything in the world. In addition, playing sports improves sleep quality. After a good sleep, I feel rested. In fact, sports are really very important to me. Therefore, playing sports is my special hobby.

In conclusion, each of my hobbies, such as fishing, collecting rare stamps, and daily exercise, are extremely important parts of my life. In my opinion, without these hobbies, my life would be boring. I'm very glad I can enjoy my favorite hobbies every day.

HOBBY CORNER

BÁNH GIÀY KẸP CHẢ – VIETNAMESE GLUTINOUS RICE CAKE SANDWICH WITH PORK SAUSAGE

One of the snacks I have loved since I was a kid is *bánh giày kẹp chả*. I still remember the chewy texture of the rice cake combined with the savory taste of the pork sausage—it's amazing! Every day after school when I was in elementary school, I always walked home looking for the lady who sold this snack. I bought at least two rice sandwiches to eat on the way home. She always welcomed me and even gave me a discount when I bought her food.

The chewy sandwiches are made from glutinous sticky rice flour, which is usually bland. To enhance the flavor, you should add a little salt and pepper. The pork sausage is similar to spam but tastes less salty. Traditionally, we place the pork sausage in the middle of two rice cakes to make the sandwich. They are super easy to make, and you can find the recipe here: <https://mmbonappetit.com/banh-giay/>.



BY LIUBOV BOHZA, ESLG 41

This comic was created at www.MakeBeliefsComix.com. Go there and make one now!

STUDENT TO STUDENT

ESLG 51, Fall 2025

A SLICE OF ADVICE

Hello everyone,

I have a problem that I really need help with. I have a small baby at home, and my older children also go to school. I want to take 12 units next semester, and I am having trouble organizing my time. It is hard for me to study well and also take good care of my baby.

Do you have any suggestions for how I can manage my time better and study more effectively?

Thank you – Farida N.

Hello Farida,

I understand it's difficult to study while caring for a baby and older kids. You could make a weekly schedule and use short study times. Since you want to take 12 units, think about whether that's too much right now. Maybe take 6 units this semester, so you don't feel overwhelmed. If possible, ask a family member or friend to help with the baby for a little while so you can study. I hope you find a routine that works for you.

Your classmate,

Sheenkai A.

Hi everyone. I have a problem at ARC with my classes. I work part-time in the evening, and it is difficult to study and finish my homework. I come home tired, and I cannot focus well. I am falling behind in my assignments. What should I do to study better and finish my work on time? Could you please give me some advice?

Thanks - Storai H.

Hello Storai,

You can make a small study plan and do a little homework each day instead of all at once. Try to study at a time when you have more energy, maybe in the morning or before work.

Fakhria M.

CARS IN MY FAMILY

OPINION ESSAY

BY MARIANA TEMERIVSKA, ESL 37

All people need to have a car to live a comfortable life. Also, my family has three reasons that we need to have a car. The first reason is that I am pregnant. I have one daughter, and at the end of May I'll have another baby. When our baby is born, we will need to have a second car so that our life will be comfortable. We still need to have a big car. The second reason is our two jobs. I work for a cleaning company, and my husband works too. We need the second car so that my husband can drive to work and I can take my daughter to kindergarten. After kindergarten, I will go to college or work. We still need the second car because I spend a lot of time with my daughter and we often need to drive somewhere. Every day, I drive to the store, the playground, fountains, and other activities, so I still need to have a car. The third reason is trips. My family loves to visit new places. We have one interesting and important tradition. We take a trip once a month. We choose a place to go, drive there, and stay for a while. During these trips, we like to have picnics, go hiking, or do other fun activities. For these kinds of activities, we still need a second big car that we can drive comfortably. In conclusion, three important reasons, such as my pregnancy, our two jobs, and trips, are necessary for us to have a second car.



DRINKS

OPINION ESSAY

BY AHDIA KARIMI, ESL 47

I like different kinds of drinks. First, I like tea because tea is very healthy. I drink it three times a day. When I was a child, I tried it. Tea is a drink that everyone drinks in my country. At parties, guests are treated to tea and sweets before the meal. After that, I like milk. I drink it once a day just in the morning. I like it because it is healthy for my body, and also it has vitamins, calcium and protein. I drank milk when I was a child. Next, I like coffee, I drink it just once a day in the evening because I think it makes me feel better. Because I am a very busy person, in the evening I feel very tired. But I feel good after drinking coffee, and I can do my homework and the house chores. Indeed, these three kinds of drinks are routine drinks, and these are good for my health.





**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!



Zoom Hours

THU - 10am to 5pm
FRI - 8am to 2pm

Scan QR Code to Join the Zoom!

ESL Center FA25 Open On Campus in the LRC!

Monday to Thursday
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

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



LOVE, FINALLY SPOKEN

Continued from page 1

animals, and our garden. Because they were always tired and focused on survival, we didn't have many moments for warm talks or hugs. Love was never spoken in our family – we showed it through what we did. My parents never said, "I love you," but I always knew they did. They showed it by putting food on the table, buying us school clothes, and keeping the house warm in winter.

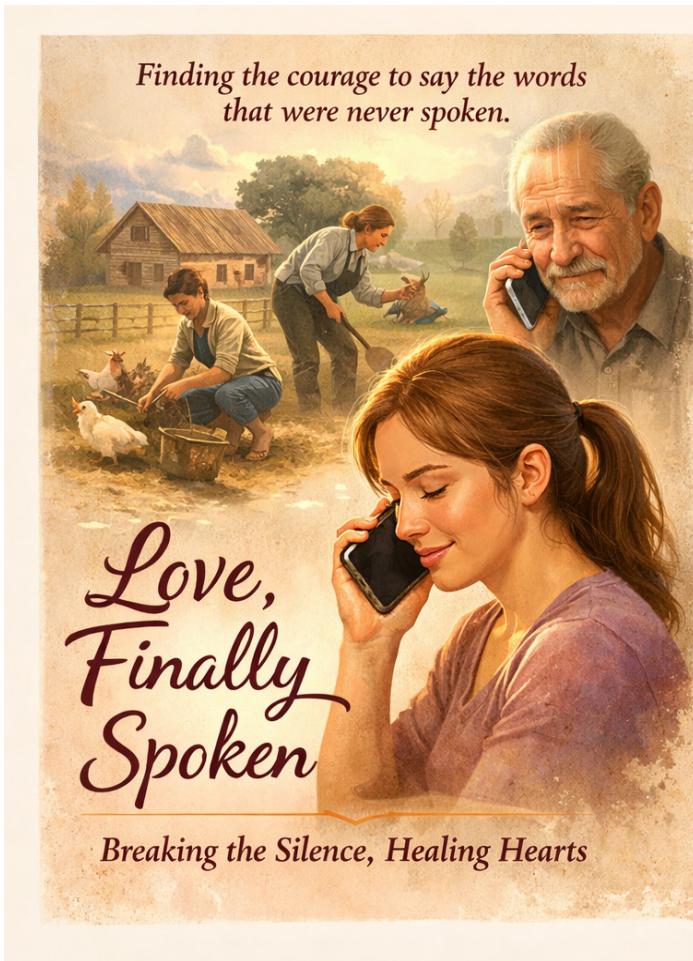
When I became a teenager, I started to see that other families were different. My friends hugged their parents or said, "I love you" but in my home, no one said those words. It felt strange and even scary to imagine saying them. I told myself that love didn't need words, but deep inside I wanted to say it so badly.

Later, when I moved to college, my world became bigger. I heard my classmates call their parents after class and say things like, "Hi, Mom. I miss you," or "Love you, Dad!" Hearing that made me feel both curious and sad. I wanted to say the same, but something inside stopped me every time. I was afraid it would sound unnatural, or that they wouldn't know what to say in return. I began to realize how much my upbringing had shaped the way I expressed

emotions. I was comfortable helping people, working hard, and caring silently—but not with words of affection.

A few years later, I moved to the eastern part of Ukraine for a new job. It was a big step for me. I felt proud, but also lonely. Because I was far away from my family, I decided to tell my father that I loved him. It was one of the hardest things that I have ever tried to do. My parents still lived in the west, and my father was working in Poland. One morning, as I was getting ready for work, and I remembered that it was my father's birthday. He always felt hurt if one of us forgot to call him. I wanted to do something special. I decided to record a voice message instead of just sending a text. I thought carefully about what to say. I took my phone in my hand and opened WhatsApp, but when I imagined saying the words "I love you," something inside me froze. My throat tightened, and my eyes filled with tears. I put

the phone down and took a deep breath. "Come on, it's just a few words," I told myself. I tried again, but the same thing happened—I couldn't say it. I felt a painful weight in my chest, as if years of silence were pressing down on me. For the next few hours, I kept trying. I cried quietly in my small apartment, feeling foolish and weak for being unable to say something so simple. But I also knew that this was



THE LANGUAGE ROOM

important. I wanted to break that invisible wall that had existed in our family for generations.

Finally, I took a deep breath and pressed the record button one more time. Through my tears, I said, "Happy Birthday, Dad. I love you so much even though I never said it before." My voice was shaking, but I finished the message and sent it. Right after that, I felt lighter like I could finally breathe. Later that evening, my father called me back. When I answered the phone, my heart was beating fast. After wishing him a happy birthday again, I repeated, "I love you, Dad." There was silence. He didn't say anything back. For a moment, I had a feeling of disappointment and sadness. But then I realized—he was probably in shock. My father had grown up in a world where men never talked about feelings. It wasn't that he didn't love me; he just didn't know how to respond.

When I broke that silence, I started to understand how love becomes stronger when we say it out loud. A few days later, we spoke again, and once more, I ended the conversation with, "I love you." Again, there was silence. But I didn't give up. The third time we talked, I said it again, and this time,

I finally heard his quiet voice say, "I love you, too." Those words filled me with warmth and peace. It felt like a door had opened between us, something that was closed for many years. Everything became easier. When I called my mother, I told her that I loved her. She immediately answered, "I love you too, my daughter," and began to bless me and wish me good things. Her voice was full of emotions. That moment made me cry again, but this time with joy. Since then, we have both become more open with each other. I now say "I love you" to my parents, my siblings, and my friends. It no longer feels strange—it feels natural and beautiful.

Looking back, I understand that saying those simple words changed not only my relationship with my family but also me. I used to think that love was something you showed through actions only, but now I know that words have power too. They heal, connect, and open hearts. Learning to say "I love you" taught me one of the most important lessons in life: sometimes the hardest words to speak are the ones that free us the most. If something feels difficult but meaningful, don't run away from it. Take a deep breath, be brave, and say it—because love, once spoken, grows stronger.

THE PARROT

Fall 2025


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LOS RIOS STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

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STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS



BetterMynd



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Gender Health Center:

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WHAT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT WORKS BEST FOR YOU?

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Available during traditional hours	✓	✓
Available during evenings and weekends	✗	✓
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- Flu vaccine
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- TB risk assessments
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- Immunizations/titers*
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*Low Cost



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

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



*Currently enrolled students

ABOVE THE FOG

BY MANNY, PARROT STAFF WRITER

Continued from page 1

From mid-November through December of 2025, a dense, stationary layer of tule fog settled over Northern California and refused to lift. Day after day, Sacramento woke up under the same gray lid. The sun rose somewhere above it, but on the ground it might as well not have existed. The air was cold, heavy, and damp. The light never fully arrived—just a pale, washed-out glow that hovered in the sky like a memory of brightness rather than brightness itself.

When fog lingers for that long, it doesn't just change the landscape. It changes people. You begin to lose your sense of time. Morning, noon, and afternoon blur together. Your body keeps expecting warmth, color, shadows—something to signal that the day is moving forward—but it never comes. Instead, there is only the same flat gray, pressing down on the city like a ceiling you can't escape. Streets look muted. Trees turn into silhouettes. Even sound feels different, softened and swallowed by the moisture in the air.

For those of us who live in Sacramento, the fog is familiar, but this was something else. This was not a passing weather event—it was a season within a season. Twenty-one days without clear sunlight is long enough for the fog to start feeling personal, as if it is happening not just to the city but to you.

And then, one afternoon, I drove east.

Leaving Sacramento that day felt like leaving a dream—or maybe waking from one. The fog followed me at first, clinging to the lowlands and highways, wrapping the car in white haze. But as the road climbed into the Sierra foothills toward Jackson, California, something

subtle began to shift. The gray thinned. The air brightened. A faint glow appeared above the windshield, growing warmer with every mile.

And suddenly, it broke through. Above the fog, the world was glowing.

The photographs I took that afternoon capture that moment of crossing perfectly. In them, layers of fog roll across the hills like soft waves, flowing through oak trees and over ridgelines as if the land itself were breathing. The lower valleys are completely submerged, hidden beneath a luminous sea of mist, while the higher hills emerge like islands. A lone cow stands on a ridge, silhouetted against the light; small, quiet, and impossibly peaceful, as if it, too, is aware that it is standing on the edge between two worlds.

Above it all, the sky burns with a gentle gradient of gold, peach, and pale orange. The sun, finally free from its fog prison, paints the clouds and mist with warmth. It is not a harsh light. It is a tender one, like the first deep breath after holding it too long.

Looking at these photographs, you can almost feel the relief. Because what is captured here isn't just fog—it's contrast. It's the difference between being trapped inside something and finally seeing beyond it. Down below, Sacramento remained hidden under weeks of gray, but from where I stood, the fog transformed into something beautiful.

For weeks, the fog had felt heavy and endless. But here, standing above it, the same fog looked magical. It wasn't oppressive anymore—it was breathtaking. That shift—from suffocation to wonder—is the heart of this photographic adventure.

EVENT



What I Learned About Managing Anxiety at the Science Success Center

BY ASILA SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

Before taking GENSCI 90, "Science Skills and Strategies," a .5-unit class, I didn't realize how much anxiety affected the way I studied, especially during exams. Through this class and the support I received from the [Science Success Center](#) at American River College, I learned that many of the anxious thoughts I experience are common and more importantly, manageable.

Like many students, I often worried about failing, felt behind compared to others, or assumed everyone else understood the material better than I did. Seeing classmates finish exams early made

me panic, even when I was prepared. The Science Success Center helped me recognize that these thoughts are "thinking errors," not facts. Understanding that alone made a big difference.

What stood out most to me was learning practical strategies I could actually use. Simple techniques like breaking study time into smaller chunks, writing down worries instead of holding them in my head, and practicing deep breathing before exams helped calm my mind. The Science Success Center also

emphasized moving from worry to action by taking one small step instead of feeling overwhelmed by everything at once.

I also learned that anxiety doesn't mean I'm weak or unprepared. It means I care. The goal isn't to eliminate anxiety completely, but to manage it so it doesn't take control. With the tools I learned, I feel more confident walking into exams and more patient with myself while learning.

The Science Success Center is more than a place for tutoring. It's a space where students can learn how to study smarter, manage stress, and build confidence. If you've ever felt overwhelmed, anxious, or stuck, the [Science Success Center](#) is a

resource worth checking out. You are not alone, and support really does make a difference.

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The Most Useful English-Learning Trick I Ever Learned

BY MOHAMMED EL MRANI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

ENGLISH IN A MINUTE



Learning English is not always easy, especially when you want to speak naturally and understand native speakers. Over the years, I tried many methods, but three tricks helped me more than anything else: shadowing, reading aloud, and listening to podcasts. Each one improved a different part of my English, and together they changed the way I learn.

Shadowing: Training My Mouth and My Ear

Shadowing means listening to a native speaker and speaking at the same time, like an echo. At first, it felt strange and difficult. I couldn't follow the words, and I always fell behind. But after a few days, something changed. My mouth started moving faster, and my tongue learned how to produce English sounds more naturally.

The best part is that I didn't need grammar books. Just by copying the speaker, my brain picked up natural rhythm, stress, and intonation. It felt like training my ear and my mouth at the same time.

Reading Aloud: Building Clear Speech

Another trick that helped me improve is reading aloud. When I read silently, I understand the story. But when I read aloud, I improve my speaking. Reading aloud forced me to slow down, pronounce each word clearly, and pay attention to difficult sounds.

Sometimes I recorded my voice and listened to it again. Hearing my own mistakes helped me fix them. Little by little, I became more comfortable speaking in front of other people.

Podcasts: Learning Real English Anytime

Podcasts became one of my favorite tools. I listened to them while driving, cooking, or walking. They made English part of my daily life. With podcasts, I learned real expressions, natural conversations, and different accents.

Some podcasts speak slowly for learners, and others sound like real conversations. Both are useful, and I could choose what fit my level.

Using these three tricks together made a big difference. Shadowing made me faster, reading aloud made me clearer, and podcasts made me understand English in the real world. After practicing them regularly, I noticed that I could speak more smoothly, think in English more easily, and understand more conversations.

These tricks don't require a teacher or a classroom, just time, patience, and motivation. For me, they were the most useful tools I ever found. They helped me move from studying English to actually living in English.

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Questions?

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The Lost Flight

BY ASILA SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

FILM REVIEW



I recently watched a documentary-style video about a mysterious airplane often referred to as Flight 513, a story that has circulated for decades and continues to fascinate people online. According to the legend, the plane disappeared during a flight in 1954 and then shockingly reappeared in Brazil in 1989, decades later. What made the story even more chilling was the claim that everyone on board was found dead, still seated as if time had frozen.

Watching it for the first time was both exciting and unsettling. The music, visuals, and storytelling made it feel real, and I remember feeling a mix of fear and curiosity as the story unfolded. It was one of

those moments where you kept thinking, what if this happened? Even though the story is now widely known to be an aviation myth, that didn't stop it from being incredibly interesting.

What stayed with me wasn't just the mystery of the flight, but how powerful stories can be especially when they mix history, fear, and the unknown. For a moment, I found myself imagining what it would feel like to be someone witnessing that plane landing after 35 years or discovering its strange silence.

Even now, I still find myself wanting to learn more not necessarily to prove it real, but to understand why stories like this capture our attention so strongly. Whether it's about time, loss, or unanswered questions, this legend reminded me how drawn we are to mysteries that challenge what we think we know.

Sometimes, the most memorable stories aren't the ones with clear answers, but the ones that make us pause, wonder, and keep asking questions long after the screen goes dark.

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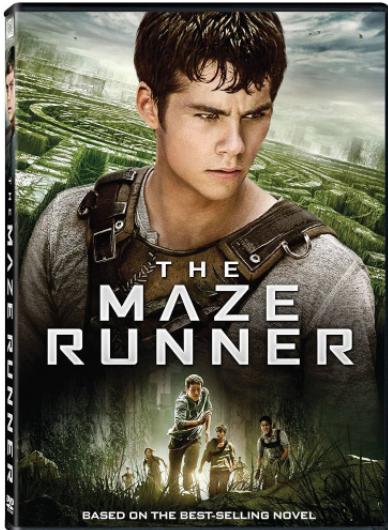
Askhb-lac@arc.losrios.edu

THE MAZE RUNNER

BY SNOW LE, PARROT STAFF WRITER

If you are a fan of sci-fi or action movies, *The Maze Runner* is a great choice for you. I had a chance to watch all three parts of its series when they came out. They brought mystery in a surprising way. I love how they divided the movies into three parts, and each one left me eager to watch more.

The movie begins with a boy named Thomas who is sent to a maze. Many people had lived there for years before he came. Everyone who enters through the box does not remember anything about themselves except their name after a couple of days. The box keeps giving people food and supplies so they can grow and start a life for themselves. The place is covered by three tall walls that are unbreakable and a maze. They rumor that no one can survive in the maze after sunset. With curiosity, Thomas wanted to find a way out of that place to gain freedom. He tried to enter the maze

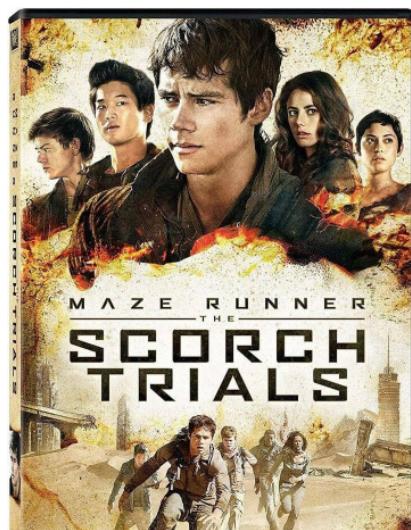


with one of his friends, but it was hard at first. With the help of many people who wanted to escape—especially after the box said no more food would be sent following the arrival of a girl named Teresa—they worked together. After many attempts and tragic losses due to the monsters living in the maze, they finally escaped; however, they were manipulated by The Wicked organization.

In *The Maze Runner 2: The Scorch Trials*, they were cheated into a second trial where The Wicked tested their minds and extracted serum for the cure of a virus. They tried to escape, which led to the third movie, *The Death Cure*. I love how the series organizes the details in each part. People had their memories erased and were placed in the maze. Then, they thought they found a safe place, but it was another trial. Finally, they came back for revenge and found the cure. Each scene of the movie was so good that you couldn't take your eyes off the screen.

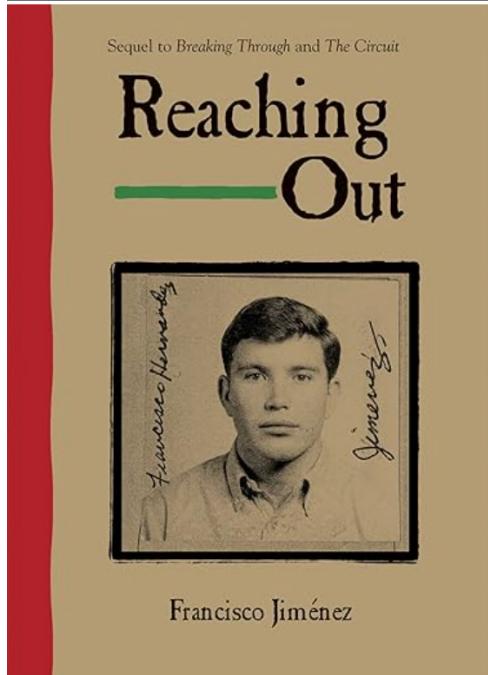
I love these movies because I can watch them many times without getting bored. The movie is not suitable for kids to watch alone and has some scary scenes; however, if you want to raise your heart rate or enjoy some adventure, these movies are a must-watch.

MOVIE REVIEW



REACHING OUT: AN IMMIGRANT STORY THAT FEELS LIKE HOME

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER



his story resonated with me deeply, not because our journeys are identical, but because the emotions behind them are so familiar.

Jiménez writes honestly about feeling out of place when he arrives at college, surrounded by students who seem wealthier, more confident, and more prepared. He notices the cars, the clothes, and the ease with which others move through academic spaces. That sense of comparison, of feeling "less than", is something I experienced too when I first entered college in the United States. Coming from Afghanistan, with English as my second language and limited resources, I often felt like I had to work twice as hard just to belong. Like Jiménez, I carried pride in my family's sacrifices but also shame and self-doubt at times.

One of the strongest connections I felt with *Reaching Out* was Jiménez's constant struggle between family responsibility and personal ambition. He worries about studying while his family works exhausting jobs, and he questions whether pursuing education is selfish. That internal conflict is something I lived with throughout my educational journey. Balancing school, work, and family responsibilities has never been easy for me. There were moments when I felt guilty focusing on assignments while knowing my family was still facing challenges back home and here in the U.S. Jiménez shows that this guilt is

Reading *Reaching Out* by Francisco Jiménez did not feel like reading someone else's memoir; it felt like revisiting parts of my own life. From the very beginning, Jiménez captures the quiet fears, invisible struggles, and emotional weight that many immigrant students carry but rarely say out loud. As an immigrant student myself,

not weakness; it is proof of love.

Education, in Jiménez's memoir, is not just about grades or degrees; it is an act of resistance and hope. His determination to continue, despite financial hardship, language barriers, and emotional pressure, reminded me why I chose to stay in school even when things felt overwhelming. As an ESL student, I related strongly to his fear of English exams, essays, and interviews. There were times in my educational journey when I doubted my writing or felt anxious about expressing myself clearly. But like Jiménez, I learned that growth often comes from discomfort and persistence.

Another powerful theme in *Reaching Out* is dignity. Jiménez's realization that "no one can take away my dignity" stood out to me because immigrants are often made to feel invisible or powerless. Throughout my journey, I have faced moments where I had to stand up for myself in classrooms, workplaces, and institutions. This book reminded me that dignity is something we carry within ourselves, regardless of our status or background.

What also made this memoir especially meaningful was Jiménez's gratitude toward those who helped him along the way: teachers, mentors, friends, and family. This reflects my own experience at college. I did not succeed alone. Counselors, instructors, coworkers, and peers supported me when I felt lost or uncertain. Now, as someone who works on campus and helps other students, I see myself continuing the cycle Jiménez describes: receiving help, then giving it back.

By the end of *Reaching Out*, Jiménez's journey toward confidence, humility, and purpose feels earned and real. His story does not erase hardship; it honors it. For immigrant students like me, this book is more than a memoir: it is reassurance that our struggles matter, that our voices belong in academic spaces, and that perseverance can lead to possibility.

Sharing *Reaching Out* through our college newsletter feels important because many students on our campus are living similar stories right now. Jiménez reminds us that education is not just a personal achievement; it is a collective victory built on sacrifice, resilience, and hope. His story helped me reflect on how far I have come, and it encouraged me to keep reaching out, not just for myself, but for others who are still finding their way.

MOVIE REVIEW



The Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship

The Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship

Thanks to the generous donations of the family and friends of Professor Susan Pezone, the ESL Department at American River College has established a **\$500** scholarship to honor the memory of Professor Susan Pezone, a dear ESL colleague, who passed away in Fall 2020. Professor Pezone was a wonderful teacher, colleague, and writer, who is sorely missed.

Requirements:

This scholarship will be awarded to three ARC ESL students who have the same **love of learning and writing** that Professor Pezone showed in her teaching and in her own writing, with preference going to students who have already completed a **minimum of 24 units in ESL at ARC before the start of the Spring 2026 semester**.

Timeline:

The application time period for the Spring 2026 scholarship will be in March (from 3/01/26 - 3/31/26), and the scholarship winners will be announced in late April or May 2026.

Application: Please see the next issue of *The Parrot* or ask your ESL professors for a link to the application. The link will not be available until then.

"I love words though they sometimes get the better of me. Being a writer has always been my dream. For me, writing is kind of like studying a language. I know I'll never master it, but it doesn't matter because it's so much fun along the way." --Susan Pezone in *A Collection of River Rock Writing: Sacramento* (page 65)



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One Community Health: 916-443-3299

Refugee Health Clinic: 916-874-9227

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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 accepts walk-ins).

**Some of these places may require a fee. Call for information about
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You can also look on <https://cityhub.findhelp.com/> with your zip
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OUT OF THE CAGE

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



Mentee Registration



Staff Writers: Tuyet Le, Emmanuel Madrid, Mohammed El Mrani, Sayed Edres Sadiqi, Asila Sadiqi, and Sofia Kovalko.

Faculty Advisors: Patrick Hoggan and David Evans

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. To see previous issues of *The Parrot*, go to <https://arc.losrios.edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter>