



Spring 2026
American River College

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The Parrot



ISSUE #207
SPRING 2026

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



MOVIE REVIEW:

KPOP DEMON HUNTERS

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

When it comes to my hobbies, at the top of my list has always been watching movies, serials, and TV shows. Among all these, animated movies hold a special place for me.

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KARMA: A MEMOIR

BY MOHAMMAD KOHI, ESL 325

In a remote and dangerous province, a young interpreter risks his life switching between two languages. He works between two opposing sides. On his way home from the job site, he is stopped by two armed men from a group he once translated for. Recognition flashes in their eyes. Now, he must find a way to handle this life-and-death situation because, to them, he is as a traitor.

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**Got a Funny ESL Story? Pick up ARC Gifts!
See page 3 for details.**



The Parrot NEWSLETTER



20th year

CELEBRATION

Explore the History of *The Parrot* ESL Newsletter

Meet the Student Staff Writers

Learn about Campus Resources

Enjoy Yummy Treats

Win Prizes!

2006



2026



Thursday, April 23, 2026
2 - 3 p.m.



ESL Center, inside the Learning Resource Center

For more information, please contact: Patrick Hoggan | TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu

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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, receive a gift from *The Parrot*

MY TRIP TO ENGLAND

BY LIUDMYLA REBRYKOVA, ESL 325

NARRATIVE ESSAY

I was 19 years old in 2005 and made a big decision to leave my family for six months. I come from a family of nine kids. I have four brothers, four sisters, and me. This was my first time being completely alone. When I received this opportunity, then I was so happy. When my parents heard this news, they were shocked because no one had left our family for more than a few days. I convinced my parents to give me permission to go on this trip. It was a trip to work on a farm. My job was to pick fruit such as strawberries, raspberries, and apples. For me it was not about just receiving experience but also earning some money and being independent from my family. On that day,

when I was leaving, my parents blessed me and prayed for me. I remember that my father said to me, "Liuda, we give you our blessing. May God keep you safe on your trip." For me, my parents' blessing was very important. It gave me courage as I left for England. I had a three-day trip by bus. It wasn't easy to sit on the bus for three days, but I had a lot of dreams and expectations in my head. While I was going, I thought about how many famous places I could see such as Big Ben, Tower Bridge, Mad-

am Tussauds, and other places. Also, I felt how independent I was and that I could make my own decisions. But being away from home, working on a farm, and being alone made me appreciate my family in a new way and showed me that happiness doesn't actually result from being independent, but from the people you love.

In England, I lived 80 kilometers from London, and it made me happy because in my free time, I could visit famous places. I lived on a farm with people of different

nationalities. I shared my apartment with three Polish sisters. It was a good time because I could learn a little Polish. On the farm, we picked strawberries, raspberries, and apples. I came to England at the end of May, and it was the season of strawberries. We woke up at 5:45 a.m. and went to the field to pick strawberries. It was manual and often boring work. I tried to go it as fast as I could and do as much as I could because we received our money based on the number of boxes of fruit. Working on the farm wasn't an easy job because it was hot and often rainy, and my back hurt a lot. At that time, I missed my family and thought about my family a lot. My family was always noisy, but here I felt alone in the silent place. I thought about my family every day.



Keeping in touch with my family was a constant battle that made me appreciate every contact. In 2005, we didn't have the Internet. We had cell phones, but international calls were expensive. I called home maybe once a week, and I was very excited to hear my dad's, mom's and siblings' voices. I remember the first time I called home. My mom said, "Liuda, we all miss you so much." Her words made my heart beat very fast. It was a mix

of happiness and a sharp pain of homesickness. Every time I called my family and at the same time I waited for another call. Also, when I was calling to my family, I didn't want my time to finish. I wanted to know everything: what my mom made, where my dad was, what my brothers and sisters did. I was happy at that time because when I heard everything it made me feel like I was with them at that moment. I told them which famous places I saw and how beautiful they were. They were happy for me. I remembered that I smiled a lot when I called

home. The people who lived with me always knew when I called my family because I was happy at that moment. Every day I thought about my family and waited for another call from them. I felt like a piece broken from a whole that wanted to return to them.

Through the time, I channeled my homesickness into preparing gifts for my family and endured a long journey back to them. I saved money which I earned and decided to buy gifts for everyone in my family. I visited London many times and every time I bought something for my family. I bought some souvenirs and lots of British sweets. In London I took a lot of pictures and sent them in an envelope. They were happy and with joy, I told them which famous place it was. When I packed the gifts for my family, I was feeling that nothing can be more important than family. On November 23, 2005, I had a three-day bus trip back home. I thought about our

meeting and how happy our meeting would be. I had a lot of thoughts during these three days when I was going home. I imagined how I would give everyone a gift which I prepared. At that moment, I thought that I didn't want to be so far away from my family and be independent from them. I felt how appreciated I was and how I wanted to see them.

When I arrived home and opened the door to my house, all my family was there. They ran to me, shouting and hugging me. It was loud and wonderful. I was finally back in my favorite place. We sat together, and I gave them all their gifts. They were so happy. I thought I wanted to be independent and alone. But I was wrong. The best feeling is to be part of a big, loving family. I went to England to be independent, but I came back with a greater love for my home and family.

PROBLEMS OF LAKE BAIKAL

OKSANA MAKAROVA, ESL 315

PROBLEM-SOLUTION ESSAY

Do you enjoy traveling? It's unlikely that you'll find a single person in your life who doesn't. Many people enjoy comfortable vacations, while others are interested in extreme experiences. Many people enjoy traveling to unusual places. One such place is Lake Baikal, the deepest lake in the world, located in the Siberian hinterland of Russia. Every year, thousands of tourists from all over the world come to see this wonderful lake. On the one hand, mass tourism brings money to this place for the local economy and provides an opportunity for small businesses to develop. But on the other hand, mass tourism

has a negative effect on both residents and nature.

Pollution is one of the negative effects causing problems for Lake Baikal. Due to the large number of tourists in a limited space, they leave behind enormous quantities of plastic bottles, paper, and other waste, threatening the Baikal ecosystem. Since waste in this region is only partially recycled, it gradually accumulates on the shores and pollutes the lake. Volunteers and local environmental organizations try to clean up the trash, but it's not enough. Pollution threatens rare species



of animals, fish, and birds; affects human health; and, most importantly, spoils the beauty of this ancient lake.

Another serious problem is overfishing. Lake Baikal is home to the omul, a fish found only in this lake and nowhere else in the world. Due to the large number of tourists, omul is caught in huge quantities and sold. Consequently, the lake's fish population is declining and is at risk of extinction. Overfishing can lead not only to its extinction but also to the extinction of animals that rely solely on this fish for food, including the Baikal seal, the world's only freshwater seal and found only in Lake Baikal.

Another major problem is the logging of trees such as cedar, as well as the large-scale harvesting of cedar nuts. Many local residents make large quantities of sou-

venirs for tourists, including wooden kitchen utensils, paintings, jewelry, rare furniture, and other items. This may seem harmless and insignificant, but if you look closely at the details of the problem, the logging of cedar trees harms the

forests around the lake. Consequently, animals living in these forests are forced to migrate and abandon their habitats, which disrupts the lake's natural balance.

Of course, tourism is important for this place, as it helps local residents earn a living, develop businesses, and allows people from all over the world to experience the beauty and uniqueness of Lake Baikal. However, excessive tourism poses a serious challenge to the region's natural environment and to local residents. But if we want to preserve this unique place for future generations, we need to protect it and also find a balance between tourism and the protection of the nature of Lake Baikal.

INSPIRING PEOPLE AND STORIES IN MY LIFE

OPINION ESSAY

BY KOBRA NAWROZI, ESL 47

Many people need inspiration to reach their dreams and become the best version of themselves. Sometimes we find inspiration from famous people, and sometimes from people in our own lives. Inspiration can give us hope, courage, and motivation to work hard. In my life, I have found inspiration from Barrington Irving, the Iranian TV Series *Khaneh Sabz*, and my father.

Barrington Irving became a pilot, and I think he had a very inspiring life.

He grew up in a poor neighborhood in Miami. When he was young, he met a pilot who encouraged him to learn about airplanes. Irvin worked very hard to follow his dream. Many people helped him and supported him along the way. In 2007, he flew around the world alone in a small airplane. At that time, he was the youngest person to fly solo around the world. His journey showed that young people can achieve big dreams. After his trip, he started a program to help students learn about science and aviation. He wanted to inspire students to study and believe in themselves. His story makes me believe that hard work and courage can change a person's life. In sum, Barrington Irving's hard work and inspiring life motivate me to try my best and follow my dreams.

The TV series *Khaneh Sabz* is another source of inspiration for me. This show teaches many important lessons about life and relationships. The characters try to solve their problems with kindness

and wisdom. They show respect, patience, and understanding toward each other. The stories in this series remind people to care about family and friends. Many scenes show how love and honesty can solve problems. Watching this series helped me think more positively about life. It also encouraged me to be more patient with others. The messages in the show are simple but very meaningful. Because of this series, I try to be a kinder and more understanding person. Overall, *Khaneh Sabz* inspires me to live with more compassion and hope.

INSPIRE.
MOTIVATE.
SUCCEED.

The most important inspirational person in my life is my father. He always worked very hard to support our family. He tried to provide the best opportunities for me and my siblings. My daughter is responsible and always cares about his family. He taught me to be strong and confident in life. When we had problems, he never gave up. Instead, he looked for solutions and stayed hopeful. His patience and kindness taught me many important lessons. Because of him, I learned the value of responsibility and perseverance. His example helped me believe that I can overcome difficulties. In short, my father's strength and love continue to guide me in my life.

In conclusion, the perseverance of Barrington Irving, the simple messages of the TV series *Khaneh Sabz*, and my father's strength have helped me live a better life and achieve my goals. These examples remind me that with hope, hard work, and faith, anyone can build a bright future.

BAD HABITS IN OUR LIFE

BY LILIIA YERMOLAIEVA, ESL 47

OPINION ESSAY

Do you have some bad habits in your life? Are they good or bad? I would like to talk about bad habits in our life. Here are some bad habits that some people have.

First of all, bad habits that some people have are smoking, alcohol, and drug use. These habits are common among both young and old people. Even teenagers start trying illegal substances with their friends at school. These habits are bad for your health. For example, if you smoke for a long time, it has a bad effect on your lungs. Alcohol consumption increases the risk of stroke and cancer. Drug use is highly addictive and affects the nervous system and your brain. These substances are causes of depression and can lead to overdose and death. People who have these bad habits destroy their own lives, their families, and their future. In summary, smoking, alcohol, and drug use are bad habits; therefore, I don't recommend having such habits.

Second, laziness is a bad habit. Many people are sometime too lazy to do something. For example, I like to sleep late on the weekend.

Another example, because I am very tired, I am too lazy to clean my house or cook. But this rarely happens. However, many people have the habit of being lazy. They sleep late every day and then feel drained and too tired to do anything. They accumulate dirt in their houses, study poorly, and are lazy at work. They can't get a good education and better job. To sum up, being lazy is a very bad habit that I wouldn't want to have.



Next, a bad habit is spending too much time on social media. Social media gives us the opportunity to learn something new, find out more useful information, and find friends. But spending too much time on social media is harmful for us because it has negative effects on mental and physical health. People who spend too much time on social media often feel stressed. They can compare themselves to others and think they are not as beautiful or successful as others. Instead of improving and focusing on their own growth, they follow how others are improving. Many young people spend too much time on social media at night. As a result, they feel tired and stressed. It also lowers concentration and productivity in school, college, or at work. In short, spending too much time on social media is a really bad habit.

Lastly, one of the most common bad habits is unhealthy eating habits. When I moved in the USA, I saw that a lot of American people eat fast food. In my country, Ukraine, fast food is less popular than in America. Often people eat too much food but move a little. Also, people eat too much sugar, candy, cakes, muffins, cookies, and drink a lot of soda. People often overeat and as a result, they gain excess weight. It can lead to serious health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, or cancer. People become inactive and this causes problems with their studying and working. This habit also affects energy levels and

lower quality of life. Finally, unhealthy eating habits are really bad habits in your life.

Indeed, smoking and alcohol, laziness, spending too much time on social media, and unhealthy eating are really bad habits that some people have in their lives. So, these habits are bad and affect the quality of our life and health.

CHARACTER TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES

BY OKSANA SKOCHOK, ESL 55

OPINION ESSAY

What characteristics help you overcome life's difficulties? Everyone has experience solving certain problems. But sometimes it is not just a problem; it is a huge challenge that life throws at us. Not everyone can overcome such challenges successfully. So, what specific character traits do people need for coping with these life challenges? Only determined, disciplined, and optimistic people can overcome difficulties.

First, determination is one of the most important characteristics for overcoming difficulties. Determined people do not try to avoid problems. They are able to make bold decisions to overcome them. Determined people believe in themselves. They are confident in their own abilities and persistently go towards their goal. Determined people are courageous, with a strong character. Yes, sometimes overcoming difficulties is a long and difficult journey, but they will not back down. For example, Helen Keller, as a young deaf and blind girl, bravely accepted the challenge of fate and began to learn language ("The Most Important Day", Hellen Keller).

Determination is necessary characteristic to overcome life's difficulties.

Secondly, discipline is another key quality necessary for overcoming difficulties. Disciplined people use their time effectively. This allows them to save strength and energy and avoid exhaustion. Discipline helps people overcome their weaknesses. These people know exactly what they should do and what they shouldn't. Daily monotonous work leads a disciplined person to success. Helen Keller, who worked hard every day to learn, finally achieved the desired result ("The Most Important Day", Hellen Keller). This example shows that discipline is another important characteristic a person needs in order to cope with difficulties. Hence, we understand how vital a trait discipline is to overcome life's challenges.

Finally, optimism also helps people to overcome life's challenges. Optimistic people have a positive mindset. Our thoughts have an impact on our lives, so believing in a positive future helps

to overcome difficulties. Optimists believe in their abilities and are focused on a successful outcome. Confidence in success is a huge step towards solving a problem. Optimists do not complain about life and bravely accept its challenges. Take, for instance, Helen Keller. She called the day when her teacher first came to teach her language the most important of her life. She believed that this day was the beginning that would lead her from darkness to light of knowledge. As a result, Helen Keller became a successful world-famous speaker ("The Most Im-

portant Day"; Hellen Keller). Therefore, we can see that optimism helps people fight even the hardest challenges.

In conclusion, overcoming difficulties is a hard and lengthy process that requires people to have strong character traits. We must be determined to make difficult decisions. Being disciplined will help us stay efficient and prevent burnout. Optimism will not allow us to lose hope for a successful future. By developing such qualities in ourselves, we will be able to overcome any challenges in life.

AN APP I USE TO LEARN ENGLISH

BY HOSNA EBRAHIMI

APP REVIEW

Learning English is not easy for many students. Today, technology helps people learn faster. Many students use apps to practice English. One popular app is Duolingo. I use Duolingo to learn English because it helps me learn new words, practice listening, and stay motivated.

First, Duolingo helps me to learn new vocabulary. The lessons teach only a few new words. This makes learning easy. Duolingo shows pictures with the words. The pictures help me understand the meaning. The app repeats word many times. This helps me remember them. I also practice spelling in the app. Because of this, my vocabulary is getting better. Duolingo is very helpful for learning new words.

Second, Duolingo helps me improve my listening skills. The app has many listening exercises. I listen to native speakers. I repeat the words and sentences. This helps my pronunciation. At first, listening was hard for me. Now it is easier. I can listen many times if I do not understand. This makes me feel comfortable. I understand more English than before. Duolingo helps me become a better listener.

Third, Duolingo helps me stay motivated. The app feels like a game. I get points when I finish lessons. I also keep a daily streak. This makes me want to practice at home

or on the bus. I do not feel shy when I make mistakes. I feel more confident in English. Duolingo helps me continue learning.

In conclusion, Duolingo is a helpful app for learning English. It helps me learn new words and practice listening. I enjoy using it every day. Duolingo makes learning English easy and fun.



A GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNER

BY OMIDA RAHMATY, ESL 47

OPINION ESSAY

Who is a good language learner? My daughter is a good language learner. When we first came to America she didn't know a single word of English, but she tried her best to learn. She learned English by watching videos, listening to conversations, and practicing writing.

First, watching videos helped my daughter learn English. She watched cartoons like "My Little Pony" a lot. At first, she didn't understand the cartoons very well, but after she watched a little bit longer she started to understand what was going on.

The pictures in the cartoons helped her understand what was happening even if she didn't know what they were saying. Before she started school, she watched how to learn English Videos at home.

When my daughter started school she also watched educational videos that taught her about prefixes. The videos also helped her learn suffixes and syllables. She sometimes learned English from a learning app called "Lexia". In conclusion, watching TV, and using educational apps deeply helped my daughter learn English.

Next, listening and speaking in conversations helped my daughter learn English. On the first day of kindergarten she didn't know how to speak English, she stood there and watched people speak around her. The first day of her school wasn't easy for me either because I was worried that she wouldn't be able to make friends because she couldn't speak English. I thought that she wouldn't talk to anyone, and she wouldn't want to go

to school anymore. My thinking was wrong because in a couple months she was able to make friends and she quickly learned English. She learned a lot by listening to the teacher and people speaking around her. She also learned by talking with her friends every day. In second grade she graduated from her ELD class. During the COVID -19 pandemic she sometimes facetedimed with her best friend and their conversation was in English, and sometimes they talked for hours. In conclusion, listening and speaking with others really made learning English easier for her.

Last of all, writing stories and reading interesting books helped my daughter learn English. When she was in kindergarten I would help her write her ABC's every night. My husband and I always helped our daughter with her homework. Soon she understood her homework and did it all by herself. She

started spelling the words, and wrote short sentences. After that she learned how to cut words into syllables. When she learned how to read, she read small things like posters and signs, and after that she started reading short books. When she watched cartoons, she read subtitles. Now she reads chapter books with at least five hundred pages, and she enjoys writing poetry. In conclusion, she was pretty interested in reading books and writing short stories.

In conclusion, she was truly interested in learning English by watching, listening, and writing. In my opinion, my daughter worked really hard to learn a new language, and is now fluent at speaking English.



OPINION ESSAY

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

BY TANYA ZAVHARADNIA, ESL 47

THE GRATEFUL GULL

I want to give thanks for many opportunities, places, and people. But I am really lucky for the opportunity to spend time with horses, I am grateful for my grandmother's home, and I am especially thankful for my mom. All these things are very important to me.

I am really lucky for the opportunity to spend time with horses. Being around them makes me feel calm and peaceful. I like feeding them and watching how they eat from my hands. When I walk with horses, I feel relaxed after a long day. Contact with these animals gives me energy. I feel happy when I touch their warm faces and soft noses. I enjoy caring for them and learning about their behavior. I forget about stress. This experience makes my day brighter. Horses help me feel peaceful inside. I am very thankful for this special opportunity.

I am also grateful for my grandmother's home. It was my second home, especially in the summer. My childhood was spent there too. Her house was not big but very comfortable. It always smelled like warm bread, and this smell made me feel safe and happy. I loved sitting in her kitchen and feeling warm from the oven. It was a place

where I always felt calm. Her home was quiet, loving, and full of good memories. I am grateful for this home and the warm memories it gave me. I will never forget this warm place.

I give thanks for my mom because she taught me to be a kind person. She always showed kindness to other people. When I was a child, we often went to the park together. We bought bread and fed the birds. My mother also liked to help homeless people. Sometimes we prepared food and shared it with them. These moments were very important to me. She tried to give me a good example. I looked at her and learned how to care for others. I am really grateful to my mom. My mom always inspires me.

In my life, there are many good different things that I am grateful for, but especially for me are the opportunity to spend time with horses, my grandmother's home, and my mom. I am thankful for these. These memories stay in my heart.





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



CELEBRATING EID AL-FITR 2026 IN A NEW HOME

OPINION ESSAY

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

This year, Eid al-Fitr was unlike any other that my family and I have experienced before. It wasn't just about the usual preparations, gatherings, and celebrations. It marked a major turning point in our lives: I moved into a new home just one day before Eid.

After living in an apartment for so long, buying a house felt like a huge milestone. Naturally, that excitement came with a mix of emotions. On one hand, we were thrilled about the new space, the new neighborhood, and the sense of accomplishment that came with owning a home. On the other hand, the timing couldn't have been more overwhelming.

Moving is already a stressful process but doing it right before Eid added another layer of pressure. We had to unpack, organize, and settle in, all while preparing for one of the most important celebrations of the year. There was this constant feeling of being pulled in multiple directions: setting up the house, getting ready for guests, and still trying to fully enjoy the spirit of Eid.

Despite the chaos, we managed to make it work. One of our first priorities was preparing the downstairs hall so we could host guests for Eid. It wasn't perfect, and everything wasn't fully set up, but it was enough. It felt meaningful to welcome people into our new home so soon, even if things were still a bit unfinished.



Alongside hosting, we also kept our traditions alive by visiting my siblings and spending time with friends. Moving didn't stop us from celebrating; it just changed the way we experienced it. Every visit, every conversation, and every shared meal felt a little more special this time.

By the end of it all, we were completely exhausted. The kind of tired that comes from doing too much in too little time. But at the same time, it was worth it. This Eid wasn't just about celebration; it was about transition, growth, and new beginnings.

Looking back, I realize that the stress and the excitement were both part of what made this Eid so memorable. It wasn't perfect, but it was real. And in its own way, it was one of the most meaningful Eids we've ever had.

I LOVE READING!

BY NATALIYA SHYAEYK, ESL 47

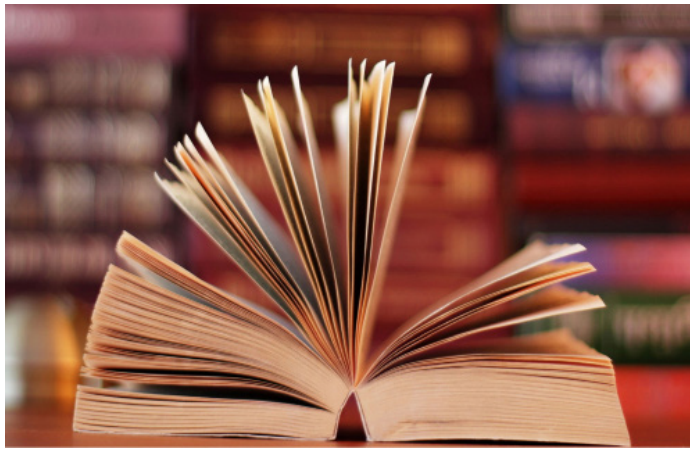
HOBBY CORNER

Everyone has a hobby that helps them relax and enjoy free time. Some people like sports, music, or watching movies. For me, reading books is the best hobby. Reading helps me relax, learn new things, and improve my English. For these reasons, reading books is my favorite hobby.

First of all, reading books helps me relax and forget about stress. When I read, I feel calm and peaceful. I like to read in the evening after a busy day. Reading helps my mind slow down and rest. I usually choose a quiet place to read. This makes the experience more comfortable. I enjoy focusing only on the story while I read; I stop thinking about problems. This helps improve my mood. In conclusion, reading books is a great way for me to relax.

Next, another important reason reading is my favorite hobby is because it helps me learn new things. Books teach me about different cultures and people. I can learn history and life lessons from

stories. Some books help me understand emotions and relationships. Reading books also helps me think more deeply. When I read, I imagine situations and characters. This improves my thinking skills. I also learn new ideas from nonfiction books. These ideas help me grow as person. Therefore, reading books helps me learn and develop every day.



Lastly, reading books helps me improve my English skills. When I read, I see correct grammar and sentence structure. This helps me understand how English sentences are made. I learn new vocabulary from books. When I see new words, I try to understand them from the context. Sometimes I write these words in a notebook. This helps me remember them better. Reading also improves my spelling. I recognize words more easily when I write. Because of reading, I feel more confident using English. In short, reading books helps me become a better English learner.

Indeed, reading books is my favorite hobby because it helps me relax, learn new things, and improve my English. It makes my free time useful and enjoyable. Reading also helps me feel more confident and calmer.



**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!

FROM ACCESS TO PROTECTION: HOW CALIFORNIA SUPPORTS IMMIGRANTS



1. Sanctuary Policies

California limits how local law enforcement cooperates with federal immigration authorities, unlike many other states.

2. Access to Driver's Licenses

Undocumented immigrants can legally obtain driver's licenses in California. Not all states allow this.

3. In-State Tuition Benefits

Programs like AB 540 let undocumented students pay in-state tuition at public colleges.

4. State Financial Aid (Cal Grant)

California offers state financial aid to undocumented students through the California Dream Act.

5. Healthcare Access (Medi-Cal Expansion)

California provides Medi-Cal coverage to low-income immigrants regardless of immigration status (expanded more than most states).

6. Worker Protection Laws

Strong labor protections apply to all workers, including undocumented immigrants, especially in wage theft and workplace safety.

7. Legal Aid Funding

The state funds immigration legal services, which is surprisingly generous compared to places that basically say, "good luck."

8. Language Access Services

Public services (schools, courts, healthcare) are required to provide translation and interpretation support.

9. Protection Against Discrimination

California has broader anti-discrimination laws covering immigration status in housing, employment, and education.

10. Limits on Immigration Detention Contracts

California restricts private immigration detention centers more than many other states.

BY ASILA SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

Fall 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**

Our vision is to **empower** students with the knowledge, skills and resources to support their **physical and mental wellness**, so they may **achieve** their educational and life goals.



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?

	Los Rios SHWC	BetterMynd
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
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- Immunizations/titers*
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- Narcan
 - Fentanyl Test Strip
 - Drink Cover
 - Drink Spike Test Strip
- *Currently enrolled students



KPOP DEMON HUNTERS

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

MOVIE REVIEW

Continued from page 1

This interest goes back to my childhood and, surprisingly, it has never changed even a little. Over the years, I have watched countless animated films, and I continue to enjoy them just as much as I did before.

Now, I have a companion who shares this interest with me: my son, Artin. He is still young, but he has already become a fun and amazing partner when it comes to watching animated movies. Recently, we watched KPop Demon Hunters, an animated film that follows a K-pop girl group called HUNTR/X—Rumi, Mira, and Zoey. They are global superstars by day and demon hunters by night. Their music is not just for entertainment; it actually protects the world from supernatural forces. They face off against a rival boy band, the Saja Boys, who are secretly demons trying to destroy that protection and create chaos.

From a personal perspective, both my son and I truly enjoyed watching this movie. In fact, my son has become a huge fan of the HUNTR/X group. He even buys their toys and, whenever we go to McDonald's, he insists on ordering the HUNTR/X meal. It's honestly been fun to see how much he connects with the characters.

One of the highlights for both of us was the music, especially the song "Golden." We listen to it almost every day, whether I'm driving him to school or picking him up. We sing along together, and those moments have become something we both look forward to. It's more than just a song now; it's part of our daily routine.

What attracted us most to the movie was, first, its unique storyline, the idea that the girl group are the heroes and demon hunters, while the boy band are actually the villains. The competition between them made the story engaging. Second, the songs added energy and emotion to the film, making it more exciting to watch. Third, the animation and graphics were visually impressive, which kept the movie enjoyable from beginning to end without ever feeling boring.

However, the most important part of this experience was not just the movie itself, but the fact that I watched it with my son. Sharing this experience with him made it extra special and turned it into one of the most memorable movies we have watched together.



CALWORKs FAMILY RESOURCE NIGHT BROUGHT COMMUNITY & SUPPORT TOGETHER AT ARC

EVENT

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER



CalWORKs

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On March 24th, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, the American River College Cafeteria was filled with energy, connection, and a strong sense of community during the CALWORKs Family Resource Night. The event welcomed active CALWORKs members along with their families and children, bringing together nearly 70 attendees for an evening centered on support, resources, and shared goals.

The night began with a presentation from the CALWORKs team, who introduced the program and highlighted the many benefits it offers to student-parents. They emphasized how CALWORKs supports students not only financially but also academically and personally, helping them stay focused on their education while balancing family responsibilities. The team also provided an overview of the wide range of resources available across ARC, encouraging students to take full advantage of the support systems designed to help them succeed.

Following this, representatives from the Parent-to-Parent (P2P) program, part of the Mentor Collective through the CALWORKs department, delivered an engaging presentation. The mentors

introduced themselves and explained their role in supporting student-parents throughout their educational journey. They described how P2P mentors serve as a bridge between students and campus resources, offering guidance, answering questions, and helping students navigate challenges. Their message was clear: no student has to figure everything out alone.

After the presentations, the atmosphere shifted into a more relaxed and interactive setting. Attendees enjoyed dinner while connecting with representatives from various campus and community resources, including the Child Development Center (CDC), UndocuScholars Program, Sacramento County services, Legal Services of Northern California, etc. These conversations gave students and families the opportunity to learn more about the support available to them both on and off campus.

One of the most meaningful parts of the evening was the opportunity for Parent-to-Parent mentors to meet with their mentees in person. These conversations allowed students to share their goals, discuss future plans, and build stronger connections with the people who are there to support them.

Overall, the CALWORKs Family Resource Night was more than just an informational event, it was a space where students and families felt seen, supported, and empowered. Events like this remind us that success in college is not just about academics, but also about community and connection, and having the right support system in place.

KARMA: A MEMOIR

BY MOHAMMAD KOHI

LEAD ARTICLE

Continued from page 1

Most of the time, we find ourselves in situations where the outcome is far from what we expect. These unexpected moments make us wonder if our lives are navigated by pre-planned programs set for us, over which we have no control. This experience made me realize that every action has a consequence beyond our control.

I had a job in a remote province of my country, Afghanistan, in mid-2014 as an administrative officer. The province ranked first on the table of most insecure provinces. I had to travel from where I lived, by car, back and forth every two weeks and stayed at the job site for two weeks. Among all the job responsibilities I had on the site, I had to interact, speak, switch between languages (English and the local language) with suspects who were caught by security force personnel and brought to the military base where I worked. I was not required but told to take all precautions to remain unrecognized. For instance, I should cover my face and use sunglasses during the day when I had to interact face to face with the detained people, and I had to grow a beard. I was advised to put on certain types of clothes when I traveled back and forth between



home and the job site, but I was not cautious, I didn't care much about it, and I couldn't imagine the possibility of being at risk. I was neglectful, easy going, and didn't care much, so I didn't dress the same as people in the area, and I didn't grow a beard, to protect myself from facial recognition.

The scariest and most life-changing moment of my life happened. One day, as usual, I was in a car with just the driver of the car, traveling from my workplace to home. We got pulled over by two armed men. It didn't take much for me to understand that they were members of the same group I had once interacted with. Many of them had been arrested, and I had served as a translator between them and security forces, interpreting between English and their language. Now they were looking for me to punish me with death because

I had worked with the people they were fighting against. They asked me to step out of the vehicle as soon as the vehicle stopped. They started searching me, looking for any type of identification to prove that I worked on the base. They called my name uncertainly, trying to make sure I was the right person.

One of them asked in their language, "TAA MOHAMMAD NADEE?" — which means, "Aren't you Mohammad?"

I replied, "NAA, MAA NOOM MOHAMMAD NA-DEE," meaning, "No, my name isn't Mohammad."

Then he said something close to, "The description we received matches you. I know you're Mohammad. We've been looking for you for a long time. Thank God, we finally found you."

At that moment, all I could think of was finding a way to convince them that I wasn't the person they thought I was. I was really scared, shaking, and about to black out. Their attention was distracted by a local police vehicle approaching. As the police vehicle was getting closer, these people hid behind the bushes at the side of the road. I took advantage of the opportunity, jumped inside the vehicle that was pulled over and hit the driver's shoulder to drive off. We escaped for our lives as fast as the driver could drive. I was so regretful of not listening to my supervisors and co-workers about the risk of being caught.

From then on, I learned the hard way to think beyond the moment; I learned to look at things from different perspectives to gain a better understanding. I realized the risk was too high, and I didn't want

to jeopardize my life. I understood that incidents occur without warning. I visualized different scenarios: what if their attention had not been distracted by the police car? What if they recognize me next time?

I couldn't forget the trauma that I sustained from the incident for a very long time. I decided that if I could lower the chance of being in danger by changing my appearance, then I had to consider doing so. I did everything I could to make sure I remained unrecognized: I grew a beard, wore local clothing, covered my face at the time when I interpreted between suspects and my supervisors, wore sunglasses during the day, made up a convincing reasons for visiting the province in case I was pulled over and questioned some other time, and didn't travel alone. I felt safer when I started bringing changes to my appearance. It brought confidence.

I realized that I have the power to guide my destiny in the right direction by making wise choices, understanding my surroundings, and connecting with the people I trust. These lessons can help me make life safer when safety truly matters.

EXPLORE CALIFORNIA: CHASING THE STORM

BY MANNY, PARROT STAFF WRITER

EXPLORE



This past weekend, California surprised us with something rare and exhilarating: unstable and active weather that turned the skies into a stage for lightning and towering storm clouds. For me, it wasn't just something to watch from a distance. It was an invitation to chase.

I spent hours driving all around Sacramento, constantly checking the horizon, reading the clouds, and trying to anticipate where lightning would strike next. It felt like a game of patience and instinct, moving from one spot to another, sometimes just minutes too late, other times arriving at the perfect moment.

Then came the highlight of the entire experience.

In the distance, I saw it forming, a massive cumulonimbus cloud building up, dark and powerful, slowly moving in my direction. The structure was unreal. Layers of clouds stacked on top of each other, with a heavy core that hinted at rain, thunder, and energy. As it got closer, lightning began to flash

inside it, illuminating the cloud from within like a pulse. It wasn't just something you see, it was something you feel.

Standing there watching this giant system approach was both thrilling and humbling. The sky felt alive. Every flash of lightning reminded me how small we are compared to the forces of nature.

Storm chasing in California isn't something we get to do often, which made this experience even more special. It pushed me to explore, to react quickly, and to trust my eye as a photographer. Moments like these are why I do what I do, chasing light, chasing atmosphere, and sometimes, chasing storms.

And honestly... I'd do it all over again

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A WALK THROUGH HISTORY: MY VISIT TO THE RAILROAD MUSEUM

CULTURE

BY ASILA SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER



I recently visited the California State Railroad Museum in Old Sacramento, and honestly, it made history feel a lot more real than any textbook ever has. Walking through massive, full-size trains and detailed exhibits, I felt like I was stepping into another time.

One of the most powerful moments for me was the exhibit on Chinese railroad workers. It had a quiet, heavy feeling. Seeing the photos and reading about their harsh conditions made me realize how much they sacrificed, even though their contributions are often overlooked. It made me stop and think about the parts of history we don't always hear.

On the other hand, standing next to a giant steam locomotive was the complete opposite feeling. It was just... impressive. You don't really understand the scale of innovation back then until you are standing right next to it. It made me appreciate how much effort and engineering went into building the country's transportation system.

One small but interesting detail that stuck with me was learning about the standard railroad track width. It sounds simple, but it played a huge role in making travel more efficient across the country. It reminded me how even small decisions can shape history.

What surprised me most was how comfortable some of the passenger train cars looked. I always imagined early trains as rough and basic, but they were more advanced than I expected. At the same time, it made me wonder who had access to that level of comfort.

Overall, the museum does a great job showing how railroads shaped the United States, but it also made me think more critically about whose stories are told and whose are missing. More than anything, the visit helped me feel connected to the history of the place I live in now.



**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 accepts 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.



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.

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 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-



Mentee Registration



Staff Writers: Tuyet Le, Emmanuel Madrid, Sayed Edres Sadiqi, Asila Sadiqi, and Sofia Kovalko.
Faculty Advisors: Patrick Hoggan and David Evans

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