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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...

Dr. David Miramontes-Quñones: ARC Vice-President of Student Services and Equity



First of all, thank you very much for your time and for your interest in having an interview with *The Parrot Newsletter*. To begin, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself and your current role?

My name is David Miramontes-Quñones, and I serve as the Vice President of Student Services and Equity at

Interviewer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi

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FROM NEW BEGINNINGS TO NEW DREAMS THE BAZIL BROTHERS DREAM BIG

See page 2 for the inspiring story of two entrepreneurs from Afghanistan.

Movers and Shakers: Arthur O'Shaughnessy's "Ode"

BY ESL PROFESSOR DAVID EVANS



A month ago I never would have thought that I'd be introducing the poem "Ode," by Arthur O'Shaughnessy, here in *The Parrot*, as I had heard of neither

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FROM NEW BEGINNINGS TO NEW DREAMS

Written by: May Yang, *Guest Writer*



Left to right: Brothers Abdul Sattar Bazil and Abdul Ghafar Bazel stand in front of their business

From 2023 to 2025, I served as the American River College (ARC) liaison to Highlands Community Charter School. During that time, I met many inspiring students at Highlands who wanted to continue their education at ARC. They dreamed of earning a certificate or degree so they could build a better life for themselves and their families.

One of those students was Abdul Sattar Bazil. I first met Abdul Sattar in July 2024 while he was finishing his last semester at Highlands. He told me that after earning his U.S. high school diploma, he wanted to attend American River College. His goal was simple, to continue his education and create a brighter future in his new home, America.

Abdul Sattar's journey was not easy.

Two Brothers Building a Better Future

Although he had earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration while still in Afghanistan, life in Afghanistan felt hopeless, so he made the difficult decision to leave his parents behind to join his older brother in America. He first moved to Germany, where he became an interpreter in a refugee camp, and later came to the United States on his own.

Life in America was very different and sometimes felt lonely, but having his older brother nearby brought comfort, strength, and a sense of family back into Abdul Sattar's life.

His older brother, Abdul Ghafar Bazel, moved to Sacramento in February 2024, several months before Abdul Sattar. In Afghanistan, Abdul Ghafar had an established career and earned a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, but saw little hope for his future. He made the difficult decision to leave behind everything he had to pursue new opportunities in America.

Like many immigrants, both brothers had to start over. They both worked as Amazon associates while learning about life in the United States and saving money.

Then an opportunity came.

Earlier this year, a local Afghan market and restaurant was for sale. The brothers combined their savings and became business owners. Together, they purchased Shinwari Market & Restaurant, located at 3323 Watt Avenue, less than three miles from American River College. They accepted the challenge of rebuilding the business and earning the trust of the community.

Their goal is not only to build a successful business, but also to create opportunities for others. They believe that small businesses can bring people together and strengthen communities.

Today, they work with people from many backgrounds, including Afghan, Mexican, Iranian, Chinese, White, and many others. They believe that supporting one another by buying each other's products and services helps everyone succeed. By serving people from all cultures, they hope to make a positive impact in the community and contribute to the U.S. economy.

During this past spring semester, Abdul Sattar invited me to visit the business, and one day I stopped by.

As soon as I walked in, Abdul Ghafar greeted me with a warm smile, even though we had never met before. I also noticed how kindly he welcomed every customer who entered the store. The market offers a wide variety of grocery items. Some products reminded me of those I had seen in South East Asian markets, while others were unique Afghan foods. It was clear that the brothers took great pride in creating a welcoming place for everyone.

The grocery store also features a restaurant with a separate dining area where customers can enjoy authentic Afghan food.

I tried the shinwari karahi, a tender lamb dish cooked in a flavorful tomato-based sauce. It was delicious. I also ordered the fried tilapia, which reminded me of the way my mom prepares fish, crispy and comforting. Another favorite was the bolani, a flatbread filled with potatoes and green onions. Dipped in their fresh cilantro-green chili chutney, it was the perfect appetizer.



Top: Bolani
Bottom: Shinwari Karahi

What impressed me most was not just the food, it was their story.

While I was interviewing them, the brothers also shared that they are in the process of finalizing another dream: their travel business, Fly Safe, a travel agency.

Abdul Sattar has personally traveled to several countries, including France, Poland, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. Those experiences gave him the opportunity to learn about different cultures, meet people from around the world, and see how travel can broaden a person's perspective. Inspired by his own journey, he hopes to help others discover how big and beautiful the world is.



Through their travel agency, the brothers plan to offer affordable tour packages to destinations across Africa, Asia, Europe, and many other parts of the world. Their goal is to make international travel more accessible so families can experience different cultures, visit breathtaking places, and create lifelong memories without spending a fortune.

Their journey reminds us that success does not happen overnight. It takes courage to leave everything behind, determination to keep moving forward, and hard work to turn a dream into reality.

Education, Determination, and the Courage to **DREAM**

Today, the brothers are not only building a business. They are building a future. In addition to being business owners, they are also current students at ARC, continuing their education while balancing the responsibilities of entrepreneurship. Their journey reflects determination, resilience, and the pursuit of opportunity through both education and hard work.

If you are looking for authentic Afghan groceries or delicious Afghan cuisine, I encourage you to visit Shinwari Market & Restaurant. When you stop by, let them know you heard about them through *The Parrot* and ask for Abdul Sattar or Abdul Ghafar.

Shinwari Market & Restaurant
3323 Watt Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95821

Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship Recipient

SCHOLARSHIP

In Spring 2026, Olena Logvynenko was awarded the Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship. Olena took the time to answer some questions from *The Parrot*. Take a minute to learn more about Olena's life, interests, and inspiration as a way to join us in congratulating her on winning this special scholarship!



Where are you from?

I was born in a small town with a rich history of over a thousand years, Bohuslav, in the Kyiv region of Ukraine. I have been in the U.S. since April 11, 2022. I started studying at ARC in the fall of 2023 after a year of living in California. I earned a master's degree in 2015 from Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics in Ukraine, specializing in Hotel and Restaurant Management – long

way, work and studies, and even when they gave a scholarship for the master's degree, the Ministry of Education gave an order to cut funding for master's students, and the staff made the choice and told us they were standing between us and the system.

What languages do you know besides English?

One day, while I was living in Poland, a Polish person asked me: "What language do you cry and laugh in?"

My heart is Ukrainian.
Polish opened the world for me.
I speak Russian with my mother.

I avoided English a long time because, for many years, the teaching methods were difficult and stressful.

I love French for culture (I studied cooking and pastry making, which is one of the so-called "soft powers" of the French) and fashion (I studied tailoring and design) maybe because I imagined beautiful gardens, architecture, and art salons.

Now I live in Sacramento, and I'm thinking about learning Spanish. I see something in common between Ukrainians and Spanish speakers: resilience after the colonial past.

What are some of your hobbies and interests?

I'm still curious: art (especially visual), floriculture, gardening, history (there is interaction between people both in groups and between individuals), leadership and financing, baking bread, looking at the sky, and listening to the rain and thunderstorms then looking for a rainbow.

How do you feel about receiving this scholarship?

The first thing I thought about was how I would report this scholarship during the next tax season. Second, how long does it take for me to earn that much money and what would I invest it in?

Is there a book or writer that you really love because the writing is so good?

While learning Polish, I discovered Bruno Schulz and his *Cinnamon Shops* (*Sklepy Cynamonowe*). Bruno Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles* if you want a more familiar reference for English speakers. I want to re-read Ukrainian classics because when you read them in school, you don't really understand the historical context. I also want to learn more about the authors to understand their books better. One of the authors on my bucket list is Yevheniia Kuznietsova, a Ukrainian writer who uses dialect in her work. Her writing is rich and often sparks debate. I'm also interested in the English edition of Yaroslav Hrytsak's *Ukraine: The Forging of a Nation*. I want to see what English-speaking readers can learn about Ukraine.

Who are some of the people that you want to thank for helping you in your educational journey? How have they helped you?

My grandmother stood by me like a mountain and used to say that even bears can be taught—meaning that what seems impossible becomes possible through regular repetition. My parents who didn't scold me for my first "paintings" in the living room, drawn with a ballpoint pen on

the wall in the most visible place. Teachers at all levels of my education were sometimes like preachers. Their enthusiasm for explaining material and giving feedback helped me learn more and feel inspired. It felt like they were saying: "I know, but you will know more and you can move on to better."

Do you have a quotation that you like that inspires you?

This is not a quote, but I tell myself: "Stay curious!"

Any other thoughts that you would like to share?

Preparing for a project in my ESL Listening course, I realized how drawing is similar to writing. Initially, my idea developed from the fact that rock paintings are the origins of writing. But in the intro to the project I have this thought: "I'm gonna show you how to draw a modest picture. And why this process will actually be meaningful! It can help you discover your own visual language, even if you're a beginner.

By the way! A painting is similar to a sentence in English:

The artist as the subject. The painting as the verb. The artwork as the object. Everything else — brushes, paint, process — just helps the work speak (linguistic connectors such as parts of speech, tenses, gerunds and infinitives...)

When an idea lands in a creative space, it releases energy — a revelation. It shifts both artist and viewer."

The impetus for this was given to me by my next phrase when I describe the stages of refining my painting: "I'm still learning, so I treat it like writing: first a draft, then editing, and then a more finished version." - this is from my experience in ESL – 47.

And my ending: "... start with a small format. It's stress-free and easy (because a large format is more responsibility and skill).

Sometimes the canvas ends up saying what you didn't even know you needed to say."

MORE THAN JUST A JOB

BY OKSANA PONEZHDA, ESL 37

DESCRIPTIVE
PARAGRAPH

For me, an interesting job is when I might be helpful, not just earning money. My three interesting jobs are a seamstress, a sport trainer, and a mental math teacher.

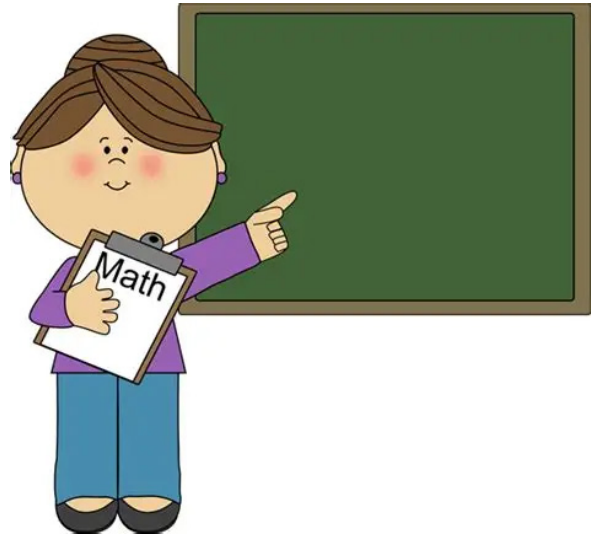


First, when I was a seamstress, I liked to make beautiful cloths. It is a very interesting process when a piece of fabric is transformed into a dress or a suit.



Second, I like the job of a sport trainer be-

cause it is connected with health. When I help people to be stronger and healthier, I am happy.



Now I am a mental math teacher. I like to develop abilities in my brain and other people's brains. I am very glad when I see great results in my pupils. I think it's very important to develop our memory and critical thinking, etc. Especially in our times when machines do almost everything, we must use our brain. I hope that the work of the human brain will be more valued than machines in the future.

LIVING IN THE USA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

BY NATALIYA OREL, ESL 47

OPINION ESSAY



Why do so many people dream of moving to the United States? Life in this country is often associated with great opportunities, success, and a high standard of living. Many people form their opinions about life in the USA through movies and social media, which often present it as bright and ideal. Based on personal experience and observations, life in this country can be viewed in different ways. It is important to consider both its positive and negative sides.

One of the main advantages of living in the USA is that it offers a wide range of opportunities and a higher quality of life. Many people come here in search of

better living conditions, stability, and more personal freedom. The country provides many opportunities for education and professional development, allowing people to choose different paths for their future. The job market is diverse and gives access to various careers in different fields.

In addition, the legal system helps protect people's rights and supports stability in society. This creates a sense of safety and confidence in everyday life. Entrepreneurship is also an option, and people who are interested can start their own business quite easily. Overall, these factors attract people who want to improve their life and build a better future for themselves and their families.

However, there are also some challenges, and one of them is adaptation after moving. In the first months, many people find it difficult to adjust to a new lifestyle and environment. The language barrier can create stress even in simple

everyday situations, such as shopping or visiting a doctor. The culture and way of communication are also different, which requires time to get used to. In addition, the immigration process and paperwork can be long and complicated. Obtaining work authorization and other documents often takes time and patience. Many people have to wait for approval before they can

start working legally. Because of this, financial and emotional pressure can increase during the first period. Some immigrants also

experience feelings of loneliness at the beginning. Over time, things usually become easier as people adapt and understand the system better. As a result, adaptation in the USA requires both emotional strength and administrative effort.

Another disadvantage of living in the USA is the high cost of living. Housing, medical services, and everyday expenses are quite expensive. Rent in large cities can take up a significant part of a person's income, which makes financial planning

very important. People also face high costs for medical care, insurance, and other necessary payments, even for basic needs. Daily expenses such as food, transport, and services are also consistently high. Because of this, many people have to carefully manage their budget and often make financial compromises. This can create a constant

feeling of financial pressure in everyday life. In some cases, people may need to work longer hours in order to cover all expenses. Therefore, the high cost of

living affects not only finances but also overall comfort and lifestyle in the USA.

In conclusion, life in the USA includes both benefits and challenges. Despite existing difficulties, such as adaptation and a high level of expenses, this country still provides opportunities for development and new beginnings. From my point of view, despite all the difficulties of moving, people often decide to take a step toward a better life and new opportunities.



WEDDING CELEBRATIONS IN JORDAN

BY EMAN ALMASRI, ESL 47

OPINION ESSAY

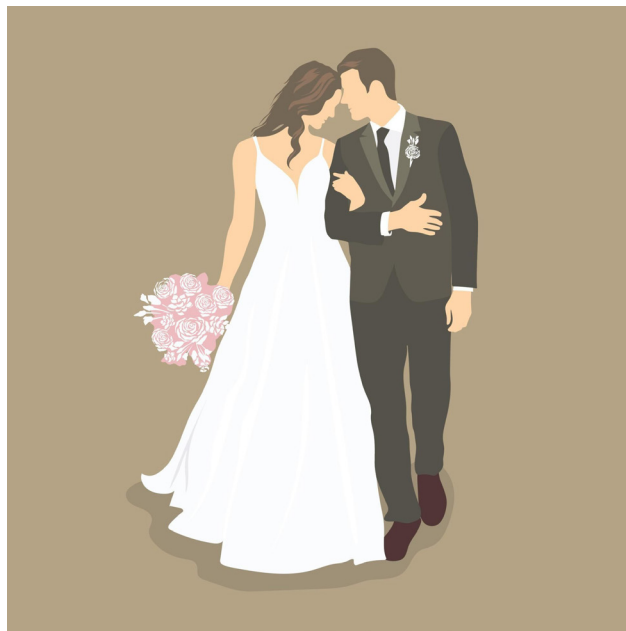
Wedding celebrations in Jordan are an important part of culture and tradition. Jordanian people enjoy celebrating marriage with family and friends. However, wedding celebrations in Jordan have both advantages and disadvantages.

One advantage of wedding celebrations in Jordan is bringing families together. Relatives and friends meet to celebrate the special day. Weddings help families become closer. People enjoy traditional Jordanian food like manaf. Guests can listen to music and dance dubke together. Weddings create happy memories for the bride and groom. Everyone feels excited and joyful during the event. Another advantage is learning about Jordanian traditions. Young people can see and practice cultural customs. For these reasons, weddings are important in Jordan.

Another advantage is strengthening social relationships. Weddings help people meet new friends and family members. Guests can wear beautiful traditional or modern clothes. Many people take pictures and videos to remember the day. Children also enjoy the celebration. Weddings make people forget daily stress and problems. Families feel proud during the wedding celebration. Some weddings include special traditions like henna night. These activities make the event more enjoyable. Wedding celebrations bring happiness to many people.

tions in Jordan is the high cost. Many families spend a lot of money on wedding halls, food, and decorations. Buying dresses, gold, and suits can also be expensive. Another disadvantage is stress. Planning a large wedding takes time and energy. Families may disagree about wedding details. Large weddings can be crowded and noisy. Some guests may feel tired after long celebrations. Traffic and parking can also be a problem. Because of these reasons, weddings can sometimes be difficult.

Indeed, wedding celebrations in Jordan have both advantages and disadvantages. They are enjoyable and meaningful, but they can also be expensive and stressful. People should organize weddings carefully to have a happy celebration.



However, one disadvantage of wedding celebra-

A WEDDING IN UKRAINE

BY INNA VATAMAN, ESL 47

OPINION ESSAY



From culture to culture, a wedding is an important ceremony that symbolizes the beginning of a new family. How is it celebrated in Ukraine? A Ukrainian wedding is very special because it follows the old tradition, which is really fun. There are numerous advantages and a couple of disadvantages to Ukrainian weddings.

The first advantage is that everyone is welcome. On the wedding day, all neighbors and friends come to see the couple and celebrate together. The groom and bride, according to Ukrainian tradition, have to follow many interesting activities. One of the most important steps is that the groom and the bride have to ask for the parents' blessing and share the holy bread. Then they are welcome to go to the church to confirm their marriage before God. Inside the church, the couple take part in special ceremonies and challenges like who steps first on the ceremonial towel (bride or groom) to show who will be the head of a new family. Another thing that people believe is when the bride and groom hold in hand a ceremonial candle, if the bride's candle burns down faster,

they will have a baby girl first; the same for the groom, if his candle burns down faster, it means their first child will be a baby boy. In my view, this is just an old tradition, but at my wedding, my husband's candle burned down faster than mine, and first of all, we had a baby boy. After the church ceremony, all guests go to the restaurant to share some food together. Indeed, dancing and interesting and funny jokes await us.

The second advantage is that traditional weddings have special ornaments. The Ukrainian wedding clothes and accessories are extraordinary because every Ukrainian region has variety of wedding clothes. Some people just in one day can change clothes twice or more. It depends on the period of the celebration and money. A bride wears a crown made of diamonds or flowers. Next significant ornaments are Ukrainian wedding bread and cake. The Ukrainian wedding bread looks like work of art. It is shaped similar as a wedding cake with beautiful decoration. It is as sweet as honey, to wish the bride and groom a sweet life together. I think that Ukrainian ornaments are especially essential.

However, a couple of disadvantages of the Ukrainian wedding is that it is too expensive and stressful. Anyway, the main tradition is that giving money as a gift is practical. The other thing is that it is stressful. The whole celebration takes 24 hours. Moreover, in some regions it can be 5 days of celebration. For example, I had occasion to join a certain wedding. It was interesting but hard to stand. For instance, just think I was not the main person at that wedding and for me it was really stressful, so I can imagine how it was for the bride and groom. It seems everything has to be perfect on that wonderful day, but you never know what can happen. On my wedding, my grandfather had a heart attack because dancing at 84 years old is too hard! I didn't know that until the next morning. In fact, everything ended positively, and after that he lived for 13 happy years.

In conclusion, in my opinion through this traditional gathering with beautiful, unforgettable memories, a Ukrainian wedding leaves a warm impression but bitter-sweet.

MY LIFE IN AN APARTMENT BUILDING

BY MARY TEMERIVSKA, ESL 47

OPINION ESSAY

Some people believe that living in an apartment building makes life better, while others think it creates many problems. Many immigrants like to live there because it is easy to find and start living in the apartment. There are many advantages and disadvantages of living in an apartment building that affect people in both good and bad ways.

First of all, I want to start with disadvantages. My family and I during two years of living in the United States we lived in an apartment building. At first, we thought that was a great and beautiful place to live here. However, after some time we understand that it isn't true. We had many problems living in the apartment. For example, there we always had problems with cockroaches, mice, and other small problems. Our apartment manager was always late for work in some things in our apartment unit. It made a very uncomfortable life of living there. Another problem is that we must find a parking spot for our second car. Sometimes, our neighbors change and they can be so bad or good. When you live on the first floor, you can hear footsteps of your neighbors who live in upstairs. Overall, for my family, choosing to live in the apartment is a big mistake.



Although living in the apartment has many disadvantages, it also has several advantages. For instance, you can choose and find an apartment anywhere. You can choose how cheap it can be. All people prefer great conditions in the apartment, but sometimes, they want to live in a good place and that apartment will be cheaper. Also, some apartments have pools, spa, barbecue zones, gym, and other good entertainment. If you have these options, you don't need to find or pay for all of these things in the other place. You can

save time on the weekend because you can go to the pool or another entertainment that is near to you. To sum up, it is a great place where people can live calmly and in safety.

Finally, living in an apartment is a great place for many people, but for us it's not. First, we prefer a big house. Right now, we live in the apartment, but we want to live in the house. Because of this, we know how hard life can be living in an apartment. We try to do something so that our lives will change in better ways. Then we try to save our money so that we can buy the house. I imagine how beautiful and peaceful a house can be. Nobody disturbs us. Even if you will have cockroach-

es, you can easily exterminate them. In the United States, to have the house is the more important than to have just the apartment. Most people think if you buy a house, you are rich. For example, your credit score will have to grow, and you could buy another house bigger than your first. In summary, for us living in the house is the more important thing than living in the apartment.

In conclusion, living in an apartment has many problems and good advantages, but people can choose the place that fits their lifestyle best. In my opinion, everyone chooses and prefers

where they want to live with their families and live their comfortable life.

OUR LITTLE HOUSE BY THE SEA

BY OKSANA HOLUB, ESL 37

DESCRIPTIVE
PARAGRAPH



My favorite place is our little house by the sea. It is a small and cozy house where my family loves spending time together. First, we often goes there in the summer to relax and enjoy the sea air. The house is very close to the beach, so we can hear the sound of the waves all day. We often walk along the shore and collect beautiful shells near the water. Second, we swim in the sea and spend many hours on the beach. Sometimes, we sit outside, drink coffee, and talk for a long time. In the evening, we like to watch colorful sunsets together. I also listening to the seagulls and the peaceful sound of the sea at night. This place is quiet, beautiful and full of warm family memories. I always feel calm and safe when I am there. Finally, our little house by the sea will always be my favorite place.



TAKHAR: MY FAVORITE PLACE

BY MASOODA SHAWKAT, ESL 37

DESCRIPTIVE
PARAGRAPH



Takhar is my favorite place because it is beautiful and green province in the north of Afghanistan. This region has high mountains, wide fields with the sound of birds. Beside that, there is fresh and clean air and the smell of flowers in spring. Also, the sight of green land is very relaxing for me. In addition, the people in Takhar are very hospitable, friendly, and welcoming. I really like the taste of fresh fruits and delicious local food there. Everyone can feel the peace and kindness in this wonderful place. Moreover, families often walk in the fields and enjoy the quiet scenery. In conclusion, Takhar is not only my birthplace but also a beautiful and unforgettable city, which I will always love.

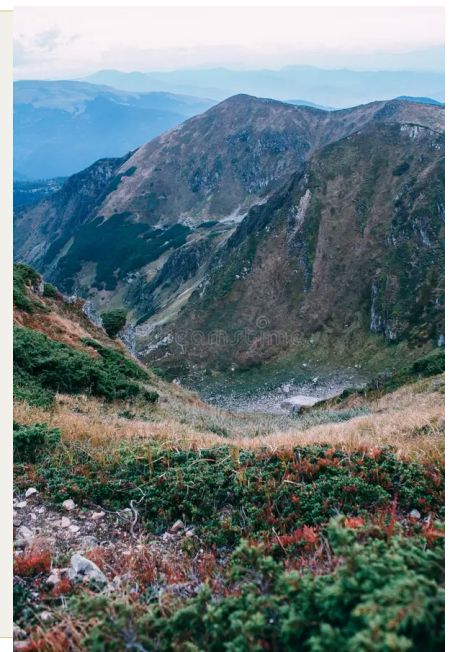


MY FAMILY TRIP TO THE CARPATHIAN

BY ALLA DOLIA, ESL 37

DESCRIPTIVE
PARAGRAPH

My favorite place is the Carpathian mountains in Ukraine. It is a very beautiful place where I go with my family. The air is fresh and smell like green pine trees and rain. In the morning, I see white clouds touching the tops of the mountains. The green grass is soft to touch and the water in the river is very cold and clear. I love sounds of the birds singing all day. Also, sounds of the wind trees give me calm. In the evening, we sit together near a warm fire and eat delicious food. This place is very quiet and wonderful. I feel happy and loved when I am there with my family.



OPINION ESSAY

BOUNDLESS GRATITUDE

BY NADIA KIPORUK, ESL 47

THE GRATEFUL GULL

My gratitude in my life is boundless. I want to thank most people in this place where I live. In this week is Thanksgiving Day. I am thankful that I live here, and I am very happy. I am really grateful to America, my church, and my sister.

First, of all, I thank America. In my country, especially of school, I was bullied because I am a Christian. In America, I have freedom of religion, free help, free school, and college. School helped me study English because I didn't know how to speak this language. Right now, I am studying English in college, and I am thankful for professors that help me to understand and speak English. Also, I am a volunteer there. I am happy that I help other people and can love them. I communicate with other people who are from different countries. I learn new things about their culture. I love this city. I love the weather, and I am thankful for this state. I am also grateful to my good neighbors. God bless America, my home, my sweet home.

Second, I am also thankful to my church. My church is like a family. When I moved to the USA and went to church, people gave me their love and helped me because I was first time in this country.

My pastor is smart and friendly. I am grateful to him for giving me advice. I thank my church every time because people pray for me when I am having a hard time. My church now has a "Tent of Kindness." I thank God that I can serve poor people every Sunday by distributing clothes and food. I am happy that I am part of this church and really thankful.



Finally, I am sincerely thankful to my sister and her family. She is very smart. She gives me advice that I need. My sister has always been an example for me since childhood. My sister invited me and my family to the USA, and I thank her every time. I am grateful to her that I live here in safety because there is a war in my country now. I am thankful to her because my son lives with me, and I don't worry that he can be killed in the war. My sister and her family really helped me to adapt in this country. I am really

thankful for my sister every day and pray for her and her family.

In conclusion, I am happy that I live in this country. I feel joy and peace, so I am always grateful for my life. I am really grateful to America, especially California because this state is very comfortable for immigrants. I am thankful for my church and my sister who invited me to live here and to take care of me.



**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!

Dr. David Miramontes-Quiñones: ARC Vice-President of Student Services and Equity

BY SYAED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

Continued from page 1



American River College. I was born and raised in Mexico, and I moved to the United States after high school. When I first arrived, I did not speak English, so I attended adult school for a semester to build my English skills before enrolling in community college. After that, I began taking ESL classes at a community college.

From there, I earned my associate degree, then my bachelor's degree, followed by my master's degree, and eventually my Ph.D., which I completed about three years ago.

My career has also been rooted in community colleges. I began as a student worker, then worked in admissions, became a counselor, served as faculty, and taught classes as well. I currently teach in a master's

program in Texas in counseling. About five years ago, I moved into administration and became a dean. For the past two years, I have had the privilege of serving as a Vice President here at ARC.

Thank you so much. This is really inspiring, especially because many of our students in the ESL Department, where The Parrot Newsletter belongs, have similar backgrounds. They come from different countries, face challenges with English, and are beginning their educational journeys, just as you did. So, it is truly inspiring, and thank you for sharing that with us.

Moving to the next question, what inspired you to pursue a role in student services in particular?

When I came to the United States and began taking ESL classes, my first job as a student was in Admissions and Records, which is part of student services. After that, I had a counselor who played a very important role in my education. That counselor helped me choose my classes, select my major, prepare to transfer, and supported me throughout my educational journey. Counseling is also part of student services, so I would say that when I first arrived here, student services played a major role in helping me become who I am today.

My career has evolved through many areas of student services, from starting as a student worker to now leading a large division that provides many student services at such a large institution. In many ways, it feels like I am giving back to the system that helped shape me.

I truly love what I do. I love supporting students, especially ESL students and immigrant students, because that is where I came from.

Thank you so much for sharing that. Every immigrant has a story behind their educational journey. Personally, I am also an immigrant student. I came to the United States from Afghanistan, and I quickly realized that the education system is different in every

country.

When I came to the United States in 2016, I was told that I needed to have a lot of money in order to continue my education. Because of that, I stepped back from school for a few years. It took me some time to realize that I did not need to have so much money to begin my educational journey. With that in mind, I would like to ask you: what is the story behind your educational journey as an immigrant student?

Can you share some key moments that shaped your path?

I came from a poor family. My parents in Mexico worked in the fields and in agriculture, so I never thought I would be able to go to college or continue my education. When I moved to this country, people told me that college was not for me. They said I should be working in the yards. There is nothing wrong with that kind of work, but what they were really saying was that I should not be going to college. That moment stayed with me because it showed me how some people try to define you.

At that point, I realized that I was not going to let that person, or society, define me just because I was an immigrant. I knew I needed to learn English, and that is why I went to community college. In fact, the next day, I went to the college and said, "I need to learn English."

For me, that was step number one. If I wanted to be successful, continue my education, and work toward a better future, I needed to learn English and go to college.

I moved to the United States with my mother and my sister. The three of us struggled a lot when we first arrived. We were just trying to get by, and none of us knew how to ask how much anything cost or how to communicate clearly. It was very difficult. But I knew I had to do something to make sure that the sacrifices my mother made in moving to the United States were worth it.

That is a very powerful story. I think, in that part

of your immigration journey, you were fortunate to have your mother and sister with you. When I personally moved to the United States, I was the only person from my family here. I had only a few friends living in Oakland. One of the first things they asked me was, "What do you want to do here?" I told them, "I want to go to college," because getting my education in America had always been a dream for me. They told me almost the same thing that people told you. They said, "You cannot go to college." When I asked why, they said, "Do you have about \$100,000 in your account?" I told them, "No, I barely have \$1,000." They said ed-

ucation here costs too much money and that I would not be able to afford it.

Then I asked them what I should do. At that time, most of my roommates and the people I knew from my community were driving for Lyft and Uber. They told me, "This is your path too. You need to get your license, buy a car, maybe through a loan, and start driving." That was the direction they tried to lead me



toward, and they told me there was nothing more I could do here.

Moving to the next question: as a former ESL student, what was your experience like when you first began your education in the United States? Many ESL students hesitate when they start because they feel their English is not strong enough. They worry that if they sit in a classroom, they will not understand the lesson or get much out of the class. Some are even afraid of the education system itself. Based on your story, how was that experience for you?

Like I said, it was difficult for me to communicate, even when asking basic questions. But at school, I think one of the hardest parts was understanding the content in some of my classes. I completed about a year and a half of ESL, and then my counselor told me, "I think you are ready to move on to some general education classes." I remember taking art history and some of the easier GE classes first. Even then, the content was difficult for me to understand.

During my second year of college, I took an accounting class, and I remember struggling a lot with the material. I had to work twice as hard to understand terms like equity and liability, and to process how to balance a budget for the class. I did not always understand what the instructors were saying because the language was much more advanced than the English I had just learned.

So, I had to use the services available to me and work

twice as hard in order to succeed.

As an immigrant student myself, I have also experienced many challenges, especially during my first semester. But among all the difficulties we face, there are always a few major challenges that stay with us because we had to fight hard to overcome them in order to continue our education. For you, what were

some of the biggest challenges you faced during your educational journey?

The language barrier was definitely one of the biggest challenges. Understanding the content in my classes was probably the hardest part of being a student.

For the first five years, I felt like my brain was constantly working twice as hard because I was translating everything. I would take in information in English, translate it into Spanish in my mind to fully understand it, and then translate it back again when I needed to write or respond.

I remember going home with terrible headaches after spending the entire day trying to pro-

cess and translate everything mentally.

Writing papers was also very challenging because English and Spanish are structured differently. In English, writing tends to use shorter and more direct sentences, while in Spanish, sentences are often longer and include many additional comments and details. So my brain was constantly going back and forth between the two languages. That constant mental translation and adjustment was probably one of the most difficult parts of my journey.



Thank you very much. Hearing your answers feels like a flashback to my own journey, and I believe it may feel the same for many ESL students as well. Your story gives strong hope to our ESL students because it shows that these challenges are real. We may face difficulties at first, but your journey shows that it is possible to get through those hard days and still succeed in reaching our educational goals. With that being said, although you have already mentioned some of the challenges you faced, we would now like to know how you overcame those challenges, especially the language barrier and adjusting to a new educational system.

I think what helped me the most was that I started working at the college after finishing my first year of ESL. Like you, I was working at the college while also taking my ESL classes.

That experience gave me the opportunity to speak English every day. When I went home, I spoke Spanish with my family, but when I was at work, I had to practice English regularly.

Getting a job at a community college, where everyone spoke English, pushed me to learn, memorize, and use the language. I think that helped me a lot because I immersed myself in English right away.

My sister, who is one year younger than me, came to the United States with me. She got a job at a Mexican restaurant, so for the first four years, she mostly spoke Spanish. Because of that, she was a little behind in learning English since she did not have the same daily practice that I had at work.

For me, working in an English-speaking environment, studying a lot, asking questions, and listening to the way my coworkers spoke, including some slang and everyday expressions, really helped me overcome the language barrier.

Thank you very much for sharing that. Although you have already mentioned this in your previous answers, I want to emphasize it once again and learn more about it. Were there any mentors, programs, or support systems that played an important role in your success?

Yes, absolutely. I will never forget my counselor. The

counselor I had from the beginning played a very important role in helping me through ESL and throughout my college education.

I will also never forget one of my ESL professors. She helped me from day one. She understood that we had different needs, and she understood that most of us in the class were immigrants who were new to the country. She supported me throughout that experience.

Even after I finished ESL, she continued to talk with me and support me. Later, when I became a counselor and then a faculty member at that same college, she was still there, so we became coworkers. I still have contact with her today. I still talk with her and check in with her once in a while. Having those people as mentors was very meaningful. My professors and counselors were truly instrumental in my education and success.

That shows how much counselors, mentors, and professors have impacted who you are today. Moving to the next question, in my Afghan community, we have many immigrant students who are part of the ESL Department. Many of them are also parents. When they think about continuing their education, it can feel overwhelming. They wonder how they can manage life responsibilities, school, and work at the same time, especially when they also need to pay bills.

Many ESL and immigrant students feel overwhelmed or unsure when they first start. What would you say to students who are afraid of not fitting in or afraid that they cannot succeed if they begin this journey?

That is a great question. When I first started, there were not as many student services as there are now. Today, there are many student services and resources available for students here at ARC. We have a food pantry, CalWORKs, tutoring, programs, and clubs. CalWORKs can support students who are parents with extra counseling, book vouchers, and scholarships. We also have tutoring and many other resources available to help students succeed.

So, I would say to students: take advantage of these resources. There is always a place where students can fit in and feel supported. Whether they want to join a club, participate in a program, or even work here on cam-

pus, I would absolutely encourage ESL students to get involved.

Most importantly, I would encourage them to use the student services and resources that are available here at ARC.

That is absolutely true. There are so many resources available. I also work part-time as a peer mentor for parent students, and my role is to connect students with the resources available at ARC and across the Los Rios Community College District. There are many resources available, and if students use them, I believe many of their challenges can be addressed right away.

We personally look at you as a role model, as someone who has gone through a similar path. Looking back on your journey, what kept you motivated during the difficult times?

I think my family, my mom, and my determination to succeed kept me motivated.

I wanted to make my family proud, and I wanted to be able to live a comfortable life. That motivated me to keep going.

When I was in college, I had two jobs while also being a full-time student. I worked a graveyard shift from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., then worked in the morning, and went to school at night. It was very difficult, but I knew it was temporary. I knew that at some point, I would finish my education and be able to get a good job that would allow me to enjoy life, support my family, and help my sister and my mom.

As I mentioned, I came from a very poor family in Mexico, where sometimes we did not know if we would have food the next day. So, I really wanted to build a comfortable life and make my family proud.

Thank you so much. It sounds like you also faced similar challenges to many students, especially students who are parents or have major responsibilities when they begin their educational journey.

I think you have already mentioned parts of this question, but I still want to ask: balancing education, work, and family responsibilities can be extremely challenging. How did you manage those responsibilities, and what helped you stay on track? What were the three most important things that helped you?

When I started working, I knew I had to pay rent, buy food, and continue my education. All three of those things were important to me. I never let go of my jobs because I needed to support myself, but I also never let go of my education because I wanted to keep moving forward.

In terms of balance, I understood that I had to sacrifice some things, especially my free time. When I was in college, I knew I would not be able to go to parties or spend as much time with friends, especially friends whose parents were paying for their education. I did not have that luxury. I knew that for three to four years, I had to stay focused and keep going. I believed that once I finished my bachelor's degree, I would be able to get a better job and live more comfortably.

So, the three most important things that helped me stay on track were work, education, and family. I tried to protect my mental and physical health, but I prioritized school and work at the same level while also keeping my family in mind. I knew those years would require sacrifice and hard work, but I also knew that sacrifice was temporary and would lead to a better future.

That is a great strategy, and I think it is something our students can also use for their own future. Now, coming to your current leadership role, considering all the experiences you have shared with us from the beginning of this interview, how have your past struggles and experiences shaped your leadership style?

That is a great question. I think for us as immigrants and ESL students, we have different life experiences than those who are not immigrants or ESL students. We know what it feels like to be seen differently because we have an accent. As immigrants, we also know that some members of society may not fully understand us or our experiences here in the United States. So, when I lead, I always think about my own personal experiences and the struggles I had while learning the language, trying to be understood, and working in this country.

I always keep students and their struggles in mind. When I lead a division with many departments and student services, I think about ESL students, immigrant students, students with disabilities, and students who are disproportionately impacted in every decision I make.

Whether we are talking about counseling, loaning lap-

tops to students, or offering tutoring, I think about the students who may be facing greater challenges. Often, those students are immigrant students, ESL students, or students with disabilities. I allow my personal experiences to guide my leadership.

Thank you so much. I truly appreciate your efforts to support immigrant students and the immigrant community overall. Now, if I take you back to those earlier years of your life, or if I bring you a new student who has just arrived in the United States and is seeking advice, what advice would you give to current students or new immigrant students who are working toward their educational and career goals?

I would say, "Don't wait." Do it now and just keep going. Even if it takes four years, six years, eight years, or however long it takes, once you finish, you will look back and say, "It was worth it." You will be able to work in the field you want, speak the language, get better jobs, and create more economic mobility for yourself and your family.

One thing that really helped me was imagining myself on the other side, after finishing my education. Once I finally finished, I looked back and thought, "That was worth it."

So, my advice is to keep going. Do not let the language barrier or the amount of time ahead of you stop you from pursuing your education.

Since you are such a strong example for us, do you think this is possible for every student? Can every student succeed, or only some of them?

I think anyone can succeed. Absolutely. Everyone can do it. Education at a community college is for everyone, and we are here to support all of our students. It is not just for one group of people. It is for all of us.

That is great. Now we are moving to the personal part of our interview. I would like to ask a few questions about the personal side of your life. Outside of your professional role, what are some hobbies or activities you enjoy in your free time?

I love traveling. I really, really enjoy traveling. I also like gardening, and I grow some vegetables. I love cooking as well, especially Mexican food. I enjoy making tacos, burritos, tamales, and really any Mexican food you can

think of.

That is great. I love Mexican food too. Have you tried Afghan food as well?

Yes, I have tried Afghan food before. I do not know how to cook it, but Afghan food is also very good. I think there are many similarities between Afghan and Mexican cultures, especially when it comes to food and family.

I have also recently gotten into ceramics.

That is great. Since you mentioned that one of your hobbies is traveling, this is a good time to ask: is there a place in California that you would recommend everyone visit, especially members of our immigrant community who are new to this state?

I would say Lake Tahoe is beautiful, and San Francisco is beautiful as well. I am more of a Northern California person, so I really enjoy places in this region. Point Reyes is one of my favorite places. It is north of San Francisco, and I would recommend everyone visit it. The views are beautiful, the weather is great, and it is always cool there. I love it.

Thank you so much. One last question: is there any book that has had a meaningful impact on you that you would recommend to students?

I love reading, and I read a lot. I enjoy fantasy, science fiction, and many other kinds of books. I also enjoy books that focus on humanity and helping one another from a humanistic point of view. I cannot think of one specific title right now, but I would recommend anything that encourages us to be good to one another and to help each other as human beings. We have a short period of time in our lives, and I believe we should use that time to support one another.

Dr. David, thank you so much for your time and for the valuable information you shared with us today. I am sure your story will inspire many students to continue on their own educational paths. You have shown that this path can lead to success. We appreciate your time, your efforts, and your leadership in supporting immigrant and ESL students in particular. Thank you so much.

Thank you. I appreciate you.

EXPLORE CALIFORNIA: STARGAZING AT MT. SHASTA

BY MANNY, PARROT STAFF WRITER

EXPLORE



This was my first time photographing the Milky Way over Mt. Shasta, and it became one of those nights I'll never forget. Captured in a single exposure, the photograph preserves the colors, light, and wonder exactly as they unfolded before me. Standing beneath a sky filled with billions of stars, I felt both incredibly small and deeply connected to something much larger than myself. It's moments like these that remind me why I fell in love with night photography.

Movers and Shakers: Arthur O'Shaughnessy's "Ode"

LEAD ARTICLE

BY ESL PROFESSOR DAVID EVANS

Continued from page 1

the poem nor the poet. It is one of those poems that simply reached out and grabbed me. Having encountered an excerpt from it on social media, I was inspired to read the whole poem. When I did, I was immediately struck by how suitable the poem seemed, both in tone and in theme, for a graduation or even a convocation. That's when I knew I wanted to introduce it in this month's *Parrot* issue.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy (1844–1881) lived in England and was not a poet by profession. For much of his short adult life, which, sadly, ended at age thirty-six, O'Shaughnessy worked in the zoological department of the British Museum as a herpetologist, that is, an expert on amphibians and reptiles. After he died, four species of lizard (*oshaunnessyi*) were actually named after him. He was, however, far more passionate about poetry and literature than he was about reptiles and amphibians, and published three volumes of poems before he turned thirty.

"Ode" is the poem for which O'Shaughnessy is the most famous, and it has been included in many poetry anthologies. Many know the poem by its opening couplet—"We are the music makers, / And we are the dreamers of dreams"—which has been set to music and used in films. Gene Wilder's character recites the couplet in a delightful scene in *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971) when a girl touring the chocolate factory indicates she thinks there's no such thing as "snozzberries."

This is a poem that wants to be read slowly and rhythmically, that its profundities may be pondered with appreciation. From a metrical standpoint, the poem has a mixture of duple and triple feet (groupings of stressed and unstressed syllables); however, each line has precisely three main stresses. Technically, then, the poem may be said to be in logoe-

dic trimeter, with four stanzas having the rhyme scheme *aabbcdcd* and the other five stanzas having the rhyme scheme *abababab*. Here is a prosodic rendering of the sixth stanza:

and THERE- / fore to-DAY / is THRILL-ing
with a PAST / day's LATE / ful-FILL-ing;
and the MUL- / ti-tudes ARE / en-LIS-ted
in the FAITH / that their FA- / thers re-SIS-ted
and, SCOR- / ning the DREAM / of to-MORR-ow
are BRING- / ing to PASS / as they MAY
in the WORLD / for its JOY / or its SORR-ow
the DREAM / that was SCORNE D / yes-ter-DAY

O'Shaughnessy's "Ode" introduced a now-common



phrase into the English language: "movers and shakers." This refers to people with a vision who catalyze change in the world through the expression of their vision. As I prefer to read the poem, the repeated "we" refers broadly to people like this, which may include any of us at various points in our lives. Many readers, however, interpret Shaughnessy's "we" as referring to artists only, be they poets or painters or novelists or photographers or music composers.

The more inclusive interpretation of the "we" helps to make sense of the visionary, change-catalyzing theme in the poem, which speaks of the "we" as standing in isolation, somewhat apart from the rest of the world in "dreaming" (envisioning) and "singing" (expressing). O'Shaughnessy is not saying, I think, that all change-makers live in isolation or that all change makers are artists; rather, he is observing that people do, as a matter of fact, stand somewhat in isolation when breaking with tradition or envisioning new ways of doing things.

Such people can be artists, entrepreneurs, academics, business people. Whatever their profession or art, they will be most effective in motivating change in the world when the expression of their vision takes memorable artistic form. I'm reminded of a comment I heard a presenter make at the recent AI Symposium at ARC, that "artificial intelligence" originated as a marketing term! What that term describes is now a force to be reckoned with just about everywhere. Can a post-AI world be imagined? Who will the next movers and shakers be?

Ode

BY ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams; —
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying,
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself in our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;

For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

A breath of our inspiration
Is the life of each generation;
A wondrous thing of our dreaming
Unearthly, impossible seeming —
The soldier, the king, and the peasant
Are working together in one,
Till our dream shall become their present,
And their work in the world be done.

They had no vision amazing
Of the goodly house they are raising;
They had no divine foreshowing
Of the land to which they are going:
But on one man's soul it hath broken,
A light that doth not depart;
And his look, or a word he hath spoken,
Wrought flame in another man's heart.

And therefore to-day is thrilling
With a past day's late fulfilling;
And the multitudes are enlisted
In the faith that their fathers resisted,
And, scorning the dream of to-morrow,
Are bringing to pass, as they may,
In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
The dream that was scorned yesterday.

But we, with our dreaming and singing,
Ceaseless and sorrowless we!

The glory about us clinging
Of the glorious futures we see,
Our souls with high music ringing:
O men! it must ever be
That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing,
A little apart from ye.

For we are afar with the dawning
And the suns that are not yet high,
And out of the infinite morning
Intrepid you hear us cry —
How, spite of your human scorning,
Once more God's future draws nigh,
And already goes forth the warning
That ye of the past must die.

Great hail! we cry to the comers
From the dazzling unknown shore;
Bring us hither your sun and your summers;
And renew our world as of yore;
You shall teach us your song's new numbers,
And things that we dreamed not before:
Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers,
And a singer who sings no more.

BATTLING DEPRESSION

ARTICLE

BY NATALIA STEPANOVA, ESL 315

Have you ever faced something in your life that you could not solve alone and needed help from other people? When people move to another country, they experience new living conditions, different rules, and a new mentality.

This uncertainty can create substantial emotional pressure. Many immigrants begin to experience mental health problems because of stress and loneliness. It may start with irritation and constant tiredness, but later these problems can lead to conflicts in your family and emotional isolation. People often close themselves off from others and try to deal with their problems alone, although the situation usually becomes worse over time.

A huge amount of people think that they are strong enough to overcome depression independently, but these attempts often end in failure and emotional exhaustion. I believe that repeated failures in trying to overcome depression

alone can eventually lead people to success in recovery because every difficult experience teaches important lessons and helps people move closer to emotional healing.

First, unsuccessful attempts to work with depression independently can teach people important lessons about the importance of professional help. Many people who suffer from depression are vague about their emotions and do not understand how to deal with their mental health problems correctly. Instead of asking for support, they often isolate themselves, hide their emotions, and hope that they will feel better soon, but these attempts usually fail and make the situation worse. Although people

often try to solve these problems alone, professional specialists use proven methodology and provide support to patients during difficult emotional periods. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, therapy and emotional support can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. Some mental health programs have shown about a 30% reduction in anxiety and depression symptoms after just two weeks of treatment. This evidence demonstrates that working with a professional can affect mental health positively and help people return to a positive life. After many unsuccessful attempts to cope with emotional pain

independently, people finally begin to realize that professional support is necessary for recovery. For example, lately I have started to notice more and more often that my reaction to simple things has become sharper and more negative every day. Things or actions of my children that used to seem insignificant now

cause a strong emotional reaction in me. I tried to ignore these emotional changes. I hoped that stress and tiredness would disappear with time, but this attempt had failed. In such a situation, a psychologist can give me advice and a specific technique that can help me return to positive thinking. One simple and quick method is to try before going to sleep to remember all the positive moments from the day and be thankful for them. This experience demonstrates that emotional failures can become important lessons and the first step toward recovery and emotional success.

Second, failures during the fight against depression can motivate people to search for real solutions



and eventually achieve emotional recovery. Many people try to overcome depression without professional help because they feel ashamed or afraid to ask for support. After their first unsuccessful attempts to recover independently, they often begin searching for easier and faster solutions. Some people start following cheap motivational videos and online lessons, which I often see on the Internet. They try to follow advice from bloggers on social media and hope that they will feel better soon. However, these temporary methods usually fail because they are not based on

professional knowledge, personal treatment, or emotional support. Although people may feel hopeful at first, emotional pressure often continues to grow over time. As a result, depression destroys relationships with the closest people in your life, the ability to work, and the ability to simply live like a normal, healthy person. One day, for example, a moment comes when it is painful for you to look at the light, you cannot get out of bed because you have no strength, and the happy voices of your children cause pain and uncontrollable attacks of anger. After many failures to improve mental health alone, people finally begin to understand that serious problems require professional treatment and support. This experience is painful and disappointing, but it motivates people to continue searching for real solutions instead of giving up. In many cases, this realization becomes the first successful step toward emotional recovery.

There are those who think that therapy is unnecessary, and people can overcome depression by themselves. Other people believe that the best way to defeat the illness is to talk more with close friends

and family members instead of asking a stranger to become involved in personal problems and private life. Indeed, communication with family and friends is an important factor, and their support is invaluable during recovery. Although family and friends can provide emotional comfort, they usually do

not have the professional knowledge or methodology necessary to respond to serious mental health problems correctly. In many situations, relatives may not fully understand the substantial emotional pressure that a person experiences during depression. A psychologist has extensive experience and has probably faced similar

situations many times in their work. They know proven methods and steps that can give positive results. You will not be alone on your path to mental health because you will have strong support from a professional.

Depression can seriously affect a person's emotions, health, and relationships with family. While support from loved ones is important, professional help can give people guidance and emotional stability during difficult periods of life. Many people think that if they ask for help, others may see this as a weakness, but I believe it is a brave decision that can change a person's future. If you ignore depression, it will not go away, and your problems may continue to grow. The ability to recognize your problem and admit failure in independent attempts to cope with difficulty is an essential step toward achieving success in the fight against depression. The most important thing is not to give up after failure, but to continue moving forward and understand that every unsuccessful attempt to overcome the illness can make a person stronger and one step closer to victory and recovery.



GRANNY NOETAL

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

Dear Granny Noetal,

I hope you can help me with a question. I am a parent and a student, and I have completed all the courses required for my associate's degree at American River College. I am now ready to transfer to a university to continue my education and earn my bachelor's degree. However, I feel a little lost and am not sure what steps I need to take to complete the transfer process and prepare for graduation.

Sincerely,
A Future Transfer Student

Dear Future Transfer Student,

Congratulations on reaching this important milestone! Completing your associate's degree while balancing the responsibilities of being a parent is a remarkable achievement, and you should be proud of yourself.

If you are a member of the CALWORKs program, one of the easiest ways to begin the process is by scheduling an appointment with your CALWORKs counselor. During your first meeting, your counselor can help you file your petition for graduation. In a follow-up appointment, they can also guide you through the transfer application process and help you apply to the university you plan to attend.

After filing your graduation petition and submitting your transfer applications, be sure to watch your student email for important updates from the college. You will receive information about registering for the graduation ceremony and other important deadlines.

As graduation approaches, CALWORKs students may also receive information about obtaining graduation attire through a CALWORKs voucher. This resource can help cover the cost of graduation regalia, making it easier for



students to participate in this special celebration.

If you are not a CALWORKs student, don't worry. General Counseling is also an excellent resource. Counselors can help you file your graduation petition, review your transfer requirements, and assist you with university applications.

No matter which path you choose, remember that you do not have to navigate the process alone. The counselors and support programs at ARC are there to help you every step of the way.

Best wishes on your transfer journey and congratulations on your upcoming graduation!

Thanks,

Granny Noetal

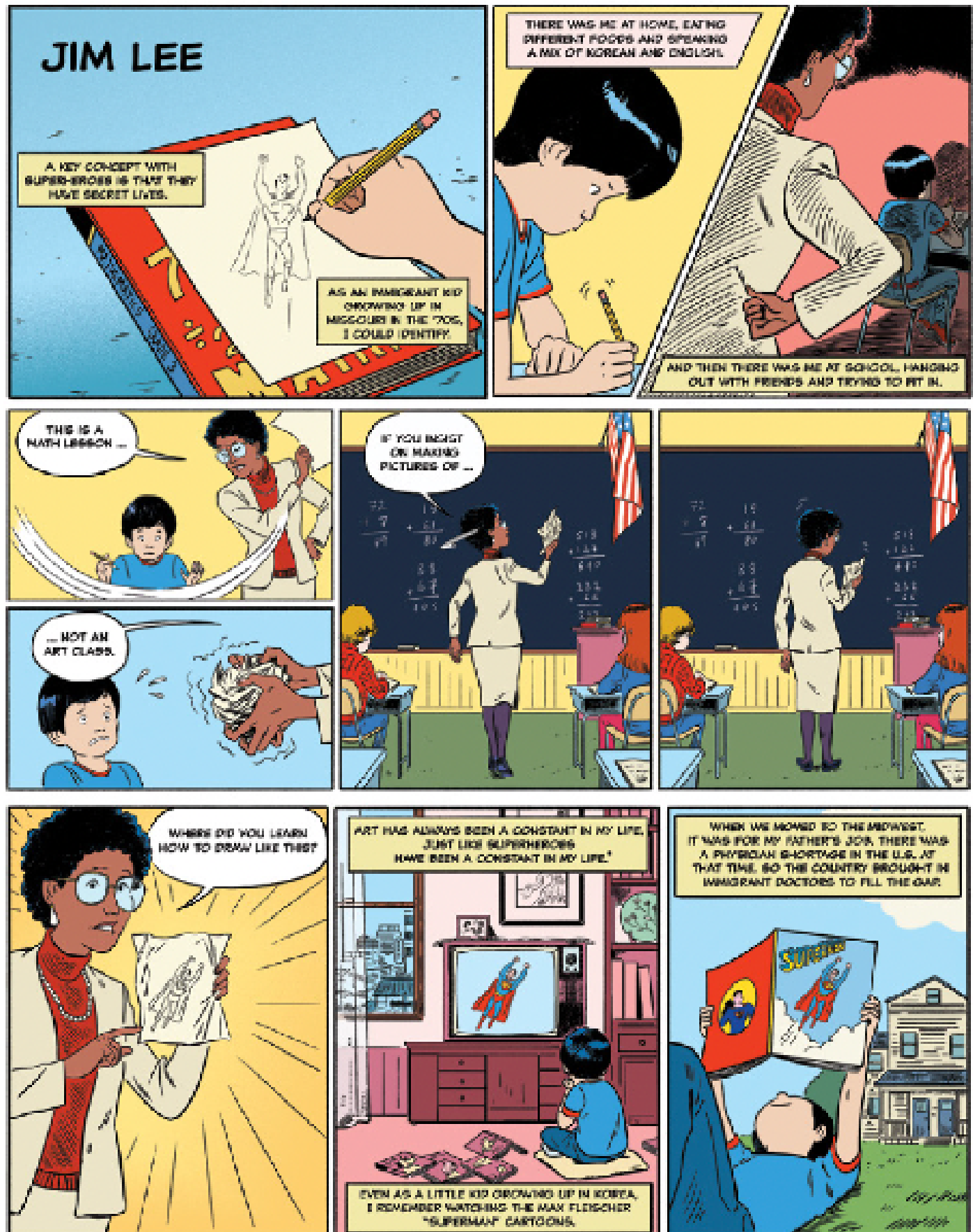
Dear Readers,

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

Granny Noetal

TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu

Great Immigrants, Great Americans



*FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS MAKE UP 13.1% OF ARTISTS AND RELATED WORKERS IN CREATIVE OCCUPATIONS. SOURCE: IMMIGRANTS IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, AUGUST 2019

MY PARENTS WANTED ME TO BE A DOCTOR AND FOLLOW MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS, BUT I WAS JUST CONSTANTLY DRAWING. IT WAS THE THING I LOVED AND FOUND SOLACE AND ESCAPE IN.

EVERY SUNDAY, I WOULD MEET UP WITH MY FRIEND BRANDON CHOI AT CHURCH, AND IN THE HOUR AFTER SUNDAY SCHOOL ENDED, WHEN THE ADULTS' SERMON WAS STILL GOING ON, WE WOULD DRAW.

HOW LONG SHOULD WE MAKE THE TUGBOY?

LONGER THAN THIS.

WHEN I FORMED IMAGE COMICS IN THE '90S, SOME OF THE CHARACTERS WE CREATED IN THOSE SESSIONS ACTUALLY ENDED UP BECOMING CHARACTERS IN OUR COMIC BOOKS.

IF I LOOK BACK AND CONNECT THE DOTS, I COULD SAY THAT BEING AN IMMIGRANT WAS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WAY I LOOKED AT STORYTELLING.

... BUT I MUST HAVE FELT A KINSHIP WITH THESE OUTCAST CHARACTERS WHO DIDN'T FIT INTO SOCIETY AND HAD SUPERPOWERS AND SECRET IDENTITIES.

AND JUST LIKE THEM, I WAS NEVER STRIVING FOR THAT ONE UNIFIED IDENTITY.

AT THE TIME I WAS JUST THINKING, "OH COOL, THIS GUY SHOOTS BEAMS OUT OF HIS EYES," OR "THIS GUY HAS SUPER STRENGTH!"

I FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE BEING ABLE TO HAVE DIFFERENT SIDES TO MYSELF AND ASSIMILATING WHEN NEEDED.

IT'S JUST LIKE IN THE COMICS: WE CAN BE CLARK KENT AND SUPERMAN.

JIM LEE IS THE PRESIDENT, PUBLISHER, AND CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER OF DC. HE IS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL COMIC ARTISTS AND WRITERS OF ALL TIME. HE HAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS ACCOLADES, INCLUDING A HURVEY AND MORE. HIS FUNDRAISING HAS SUPPORTED COMIC BOOK STORES, HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE, AND CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH. READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES

... WHICH I THINK IS A BIG PART OF THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE.

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

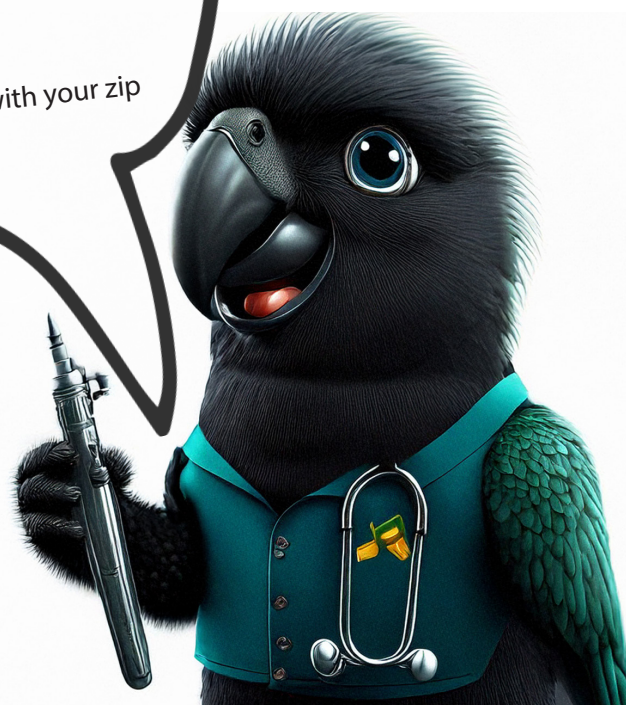
California Northstate University: 916-686-8914 (Dentistry School)

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 the students' experience by connecting CalWORKs students with a mentor from within the program. Students are paired with someone invested in their success--a person ready to listen, inspire, help navigate challenges, and recognize opportunities.

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

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



Mentee Registration



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Please let us know what we can do to improve *The Parrot*. We appreciate any and all feedback you are willing to give us. Contact us at TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu. To see previous issues of *The Parrot*, go to <https://arc.losrios.edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter>