



Author Biographies

Yuko Akiyama – p. 99, 100

Jesse Altman – p. 5

Jesse is a resident of the Dayton area and was a contest finalist last year. The title from his poem last year was "Overcoming".

Analia Amarilla – p. 99

Sara Angella – p. 99

I am from Italy and have studied English for 5 years. I hope to improve my speaking and pronunciation while I am in the U.S. working as an au pair for one year.

Esmaralda Apaza – p. 99

I am from Peru. I am working as an au pair in the United States for one year. I attend Live Oaks Vocational School to concentrate on improving my skills in speaking and writing.

Bradley C. Bechtel – p. 94

Mindy Blaney – p. 49

Aline Bora – p. 99

Judy Brewer – p. 55

My name is Judy Brewer. I love to read and write. I enjoy T.V. and playing games on the computer.

Gary Brown – p. 95

Samuel Buckingham – p. 51, 76

Born in Plattsburg, New York, in 1985, Samuel has traveled the United States extensively and has lived in five American states: Arizona, Texas, Montana, Indiana, and Ohio. An Ohio resident of 16 years, Samuel attended Fairmont High School and is currently working on upgrading his basic skills to achieve his goals. Samuel lives in Beavercreek, Ohio, with his family.

Rose Buckner – p. 45, 49

After graduating from Milford High School in 1948, I didn't feel as if I was college material, so I dropped the idea of further education. One thing that stayed in my mind was my sophomore journalism class with a very firm English teacher. During the month of February, I wrote an article on the two presidents whose birthdays were in February. The teacher accepted it, and my article was published in our school's newspaper, "The Reflector." Many years later, I started in the ABLE Class at Live Oaks and was introduced to the Ohio Writers' Conference in 2000. I was inspired by a wonderful teacher, Marty Lopinto, to write again. I have been published or received honorable mention in Beginnings every year for six or seven years. At this late date in my life, I found that it is never too late to learn and pick up where you left off.

Joanne Carey – p. 35**Brenda Carroll – p. 139**

I'm 56 years old. I live in Circleville, Ohio, where I attend Pickaway County ABLE classes. I enjoy learning. I enjoy writing stories. I want to thank my mother, my family, and all of my teachers who gave me the confidence that I can do it.

Susan Choe – p. 99

Dialne Chuck – p. 9

I am 18 years old. I live in Delaware, Ohio, and have been taking GED classes through the Delaware Area Career Center. I moved here from California. As soon as I moved to Ohio, I started writing my thoughts and feelings and I have been writing ever since.

Benjamin C. Clark – p. 83**Myran Clark – p. 66**

My name is Myran Clark. I am an outgoing individual who would like to go into the field of construction.

Tonya Clark – p. 109

I am the mother of a 5-year-old son whom I adore. I am attending classes at Live Oaks to get my GED. After achieving that goal, I plan on attending Massage Therapy School.

Yi Daio – p. 53

I am from China. I came to Cleveland in August 2007 because my husband was a student at Case Western Reserve University. I enrolled in the ESL class at Case to improve my English. This course not only helped me in the language but taught me a lot about American culture. I have a lot of fun with my teacher and fellow classmates who come from all over the world. My husband has been given a job here, and we are expecting our first child. Both of these events have made us extremely happy.

Tessia Davis – p. 95**Mary Dortch – p. 95****Anthony Dunn – p. 49**

I attended ABLE classes at Live Oaks in Milford. I worked very hard and achieved my goal of passing the GED Test in March. I'm not sure where I'm heading from here, but have

many options. The most important things in my life are God, family and music.

Maria Egoavil – p. 31

I was born in Peru. I work at Pierre Foods in Cincinnati, Ohio, and attend The Learning Center. I am the proud mother of three boys.

Karen Flick – p. 27, 37

My name is Karen Flick. I am married and have two beautiful daughters. My heart goes out to those families who lose their loved ones to war.

JoAnn Franke – p. 104

I am a 77-year-old ABLE/GED student who lives in Pleasantville, Ohio. When asked why I am studying for my GED, I tell them it is keeping the moss off of my wheels.

Ronald W. Fugate – p. 65, 112

I am a 63-year-old man who has not finished high school or gotten my GED, or finished college. I'm looking forward to accomplishing all of the above. I've raised my family, my wife has passed away, and I'm by myself. The goals that I have set for myself this late in life are the following: to get my GED, to go to college, and to write a book.

Nate Gammon – p. 95

Luciana Garner – p.95

Fereweini Gebrehiwet – p. 92

I was born and raised in Asmara, the capital city of Eritrea, a country in Africa. I am married and have a 13-year-old son. I am now attending a GED preparatory class. It has been 22 years since I was in school! When I finish this class, I would like to take some cooking classes, which has always been my dream.

Chad Hale – p. 43

I've been living with my foster family for five months now as of April, 2009. I love my foster family. They treat me well. I enjoy sports and being with my family and friends. I hope I can go on to college or some other training. I'm glad my story was published. Thank you for selecting it.

Zeze Hamilton – p. 95**Mary Harris – p. 131**

I am a single mom of three children and had a stressful and depressed life in my past. Now I'm looking forward to being a successful person and having a better life in the future for my children.

Sophea Heng – p. 59

I am from Cambodia. I came to the United States almost 3 years ago. I work and attend ESOL classes to improve my English. I plan to continue my higher education here. Living here, I have had many different experiences I compare to my life in a small country. Here in America I see natural beauty, freedom, love and strong values all coming together. It seems to me that America offers endless possibilities. This makes me feel sad for my fellow countrymen who have suffered so much since the Civil War. My hope is that soon people in Cambodia will enjoy freedom. Much of my heart remains there.

Anastasia Henize – p. 32

I was born and raised in Sochi, Russia. After traveling for quite a while, I found my home in the United States – Miami, Atlanta, then Cincinnati. I can't wait to see what state will follow next. Hopefully it will be a state in the south. I am married and have a beautiful six-year-old daughter.

Sheila Hightower – p. 37

I am an employee at Pierre Foods in Cincinnati. I attend the Learning Center and have improved my math and English. My hobbies include going to the movies, cooking, and working on the computer.

Bormey Hing – p. 147

I'm from Cambodia. I am 26 years old and have only been in Columbus for fifteen months. When I first arrived here, I felt sad because it's very quiet in Columbus, not at all the same as in Cambodia. But now I love it here! I have a good family to make me happy and warm. I am studying English at Eastland Career Center and would like to get my GED. I would like to study nursing skills so I'll be able to get a good job.

Heather Holscher – p. 137

I am the proud mother of a nine-month-old boy. I attended morning classes in the fall at Live Oaks and received my GED in December 2008! I am happy being a stay-at-home mom. I'm not sure what my future plans are, but I plan to further my education.

Yvonne Howard – p. 95**Masayuki Itaya – Cover art**

I like to draw in my free time. When my teacher, Sameera, asked me to draw, I thought about my country, Japan. I drew *One Soup, Three Bowls*.

Denzel Jenkins – p. 95**Carl Jennings – p. 6**

My name is Carl Jennings, and I have lived in the Mahoning Valley all my life. I enjoy reading, writing, and playing chess. I think the Ohio Writers' Conference is a good opportunity to gain some experience in writing.

Tonia S. Jones – p. 136

My name is Tonia. I work at Pierre Foods in Cincinnati, Ohio. I have two teenagers, Lindsey and Sam. I enjoy spending time with them.

Sumalee Kennedy – p. 99

I arrived in the U.S. from Thailand in 2006. My native language is Thai. I am a mother of two children. I attend Live Oaks Vocational School in Milford, Ohio.

Kaew Khonken – p. 68, 99

My name is Kaew Khonken, and I'm from Thailand. I work as an au pair in Cincinnati, Ohio. I enjoy attending ESOL class at Live Oaks.

Kennic Kirk – p. 95**Constance Kocher – p. 70**

Constance Kocher grew up in Chardon, Ohio, and is one of eight children. She loves reading and writing. She lives in Eastlake, Ohio, and is happy she received her GED. She is from Painesville ABLE.

Betty Krimmer – p. 99**Kara Kurtz – p. 99**

I am from Thailand. I have been living in the United States since 1999. I studied English for 2 months prior to enrolling in Live Oaks Vocational School to improve my English skills.

Shontay Lee – p. 95**Mattie Linscott – p. 18**

I'm a 30-year-old mother of 2 boys and a girl, and I help my family's finances by delivering papers in the wee hours of the morning and still go to school so I can further my education.

Layla Martin – p. 10

I enjoy learning and meeting new friends. I've attended ESOL and now ABE classes at Live Oaks in Milford, Ohio. I want to improve my reading, writing and math skills.

Paula Mitchell – p. 26, 49, 132

My name is Paula Mitchell. I'm a single mother of 3 children. Jesus has really changed my life and has given me the strength to go on.

Tania Montalban – p. 110

I'm from Nicaragua. I have lived in Ohio for 4 years. I'm studying in a Bridges class at Eastland Career Center. I have a very good teacher; her name is Charlotte Putt. Three months ago I became a U.S. citizen. My next goals are to learn to speak English very well and, if God gives me the strength, to work as a doctor again. I was a doctor in Nicaragua, and I would like to continue helping people in the United States.

Jessica Morrow – p. 95**Ines Mueller – p. 23, 99**

My name is Ines Mueller, and I'm from Germany. I work as an au pair in the country. I've been attending ESOL classes at Live Oaks for 4 months.

Martha Munoz – p. 99**Erin Nealey – p. 138**

My name is Erin Nealey. I was born and raised in Ohio. I am married to my best friend, and we have three beautiful children. My children are a lot of the inspiration for my poetry!

Deborah Norah – p. 95

Christian O'Mara – p. 49

I have been attending ABLE classes at Live Oaks in Milford. My goal is to pass the GED Test. After that, I have a strong desire to serve my country and go to college.

Vernon O'Neal – p. 95**Cristina Ortiz – Back Cover Art**

I would like to write my feelings and thoughts in stories and poetry, but I cannot find good words and beautiful sentences for that. Instead, I draw a picture to express myself, my feelings, and a story.

Soichi Oya – p. 7

I am from Japan. I am currently working at Cleveland Clinic as a visiting doctor. This was always a dream of mine. I have encountered people from many different cultures not only in my work, but also in my daily life. This puzzles and amazes me. This is not the case in Japan. My wife is teaching here at a school for Japanese children. We are both enjoying our lives here.

Eneida Peck – p. 15

I have experienced many different things in my life. Some of them were difficult, but I survived. I sometimes think I must have nine lives like a cat. I enjoyed telling my life story and hope that others can take something from it that will make their lives better. Life in the USA is not as bad as some people think it is. I hope people who read this will understand why.

Maria S. Perez – p. 34

I was born in Mexico. I moved to the U.S. in 2000 with my husband and three children. We lived in California for several years before relocating to Ohio. I enjoy spending time with my children, reading, swimming and traveling.

Gloria Philhower – p. 143

My name is Gloria Philhower. I am 35 years old and live in Milford, Ohio. I have two daughters – Brittany (15) and Savannah (8). I work the night shift at a printing company, and I would like to change jobs and get into nursing. By getting my GED, I hope to be one step closer to my goal.

Catherine Phillips – p. 37**Brian C. Potts – p. 84**

My name is Brian Potts. I am 20 years old from Urbana, Ohio. I enjoy writing and someday I hope to make it my profession. Writing is the way I express myself and get my head on right when I am going to do something that I may regret. Writing is the only positive way I know how to express myself.

Monique Privara – p. 64

I wrote this poem while I was teaching my grandson to tie his shoes.

Lisa Reynolds – p. 49**Lena Ritter – p. 99, 145**

Hello, my name is Lena Ritter and I'm from Germany. I'm 22 years old and work as an au pair in this country. I enjoy living in the United States, but I really miss my family a lot.

Yavanoot Robbins – p. 99

I arrived in the United States in June of 2008 from Thailand. My native language is Thai. I worked for a car dealership while in Thailand. I am improving my English as a student at Live Oaks Vocational School.

Charlene Robinson – p. 81

I attended ABLE classes at Live Oaks in Milford, Ohio. In November 2008 I obtained my GED. I plan to continue my education in the medical field.

Tyeisha Ruskin – p. 95**Ifrah Samalar – p. 75**

Ifrah Samalar is an ESL student living in Columbus.

Anna Carolina Santiago – p. 99

I am from Brazil. My native language is Portuguese. I arrived in the fall to the U.S., and I work as an au pair. I studied English for 2 years prior to my arrival in Ohio.

Patricia Smith – p. 95**Jeehye Song – p. 47**

I am from South Korea. I have lived in Cleveland for one year. My husband is a Post-Doctoral student in the physics department at Case Western Reserve University. I was an elementary school teacher in Seoul. My husband and I love and hope to travel a bit while we are here. We are expecting our first child and that is my focus now. I find life here very comfortable and much less competitive than South Korea. I love the ESOL classes. I not only improve my English skills, but I meet international students and make many friends.

Micaela Strickland – p. 22**Miko Tabler – p. 79****Rawaa Taki – p. 67**

I arrived from Iraq in August 2008 along with my husband and two young sons. I am a trained pharmacist. As well as attending English classes, I have been studying many hours so I can pass the test to become certified here in the U.S. When I have time, I enjoy reading, home decorating and cooking delicious meals for friends and family.

Xinxin Tang – p. 11

I came to the United States last year with my husband, who works at Cleveland Clinic researching Parkinson's Disease. We have no family here, and I miss my parents and brother very much. However, I have made a lot of friends from China and from other countries also. The ESL class at Case Western University has been a wonderful source for meeting an international group of people. In the beginning, I felt awkward speaking English but the class helped build my confidence. I not only learned English but broadened my perspective on life. I was a nurse in China and even though my visa will not permit me to work as a nurse here, I volunteer at the Clinic and a nursing home. I get a great sense of satisfaction from this work, and I learn a lot that I could never get from books.

Doreen Taylor – p. 3

I came from Malaysia almost one year ago after marrying an American man. I have completed studies in business in Malaysia.

Victor Taylor – p. 49, 142

I dedicate my writings to my loving wife. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007, so I dedicate them to her.

Robert Todd – p. 121

Robert Todd is very dedicated to his studies. He always comes to class on time and is an active participant in all discussions.

Atonya Trusty – p. 49**Darlene Underwood – p. 39**

Ellen Valvassori – p. 49, 85, 113, 133

My name is Ellen Caroline Valvassori, and I'm 22 years old and from Brazil. In this country I work as an au pair. I've been attending ESOL classes at Live Oaks for 5 months.

Xeng Veopraseuth – p. 97

I have been in the United States for 25 years. I attend a Bridges class at Eastland Career Center. My English is improving. Now I can read, speak, write and listen much better. I feel happy and comfortable because I can take care of myself. I can communicate with my doctor and other American people much better now. My life has changed so much! I would like to continue taking English class so that one day in the future I may be able to achieve my goal of getting a GED.

Gladis Villavicencio – p. 99

I am from Peru. I worked as a businesswoman in Peru before coming to the United States with my husband and daughter. My native language is Spanish, and I attend Live Oaks Vocational School. I am working hard to improve my speaking ability in English.

LaQwanda Walker – p. 77

My name is LaQwanda Walker, and I am twenty-eight years old. I am a mother of three boys. I am attending GED classes at Youngstown ABLE.

Sherry Walter – p. 119

A special thanks to Amy Guda!! I couldn't have done as well as I have without your support and teaching.

XianXian Wang – p. 62

I am from China. I am in Cleveland with an F2 visa, which allows me to remain here for at least 4 years, because my husband is a student at Case Western Reserve University. My major job here is to take care of the house, but I am not

locked in the kitchen cooking and cleaning all day. I try to participate in much of the colorful life offered here. I volunteer for 2 non-profit organizations. I am an usher for Playhouse Square, and I work in a Chinese school teaching adults Chinese. I love to read and spend lots of time in the library reading the *New York Times*. I also like watching *60 Minutes* and, as a former journalist, it is exciting. Lately, I have added regular museum visits to my schedule and try to go to all the festivals and exhibits. My life here is a journey. I am not sure where it will end, but I am going to enjoy the ride.

Julie Ward – p. 154 Art

I have been involved with art most of my life. My piece, *The Angel of Hope*, was drawn in 2007. I believe it directly contributes to the art and literature contained in prior *Beginnings* compilations from the standpoint that hope is change for the better, “a new beginning,” if you will. I attend ABLE classes at the Job Center in Akron, Ohio, and am almost prepared to take the GED test.

Carla Watkins – p. 149

My name is Carla, and I'm 21 years old. I have a beautiful daughter and another little girl on the way. I have a wonderful family and an outstanding fiancé. I would also like to thank all of my ABLE teachers for all of their hard work.

Rickie Weise – p. 49, 123

I started the GED classes at Live Oaks in November of 2008. I plan to stay with the program until I receive my degree.

Carmen Williams – p. 95

Kim Wilson – p. 37

Realdia Wilson – p. 125

Afi Wozufia – p. 37

I am from Togo in West Africa. I came to the USA in 2002 with my husband and three children. I have been married for 26 years and am very happy with my family. I have been working at Pierre Foods for about 6 years. I attend the Learning Center to improve my English and math skills.

Seung-Ho Yang – p. 102

I am from South Korea. I came to the United States because my wife was studying social work, and I became a house husband. In South Korea I worked for a government agency. Before coming here I traveled to 15 different countries. I am an avid scuba diver, and I go where the water is warm and the weather is tropical. These travels gave me insight into the value of diversity. The ESL class at Case Western Reserve University offered me an opportunity to learn the American culture as well as English. I am excited to see where my life will take me.

Clay Young – p. 80

I am an ABLE/GED student from Bremen, Ohio. I obtained my GED in November, 2008, but still attend ABLE classes at Lancaster Fairfield Community Action to prepare for my post secondary education.

