

Author Biographies

Sara Arthon - p. 92

Steve Baird - p. 12, 92

I was born in Jellico, Tennessee, and raised in the hills of Kentucky. I am one of nine children, one girl and eight boys. I love the way I was raised, but I dropped out of school at the age of 16. Now I'm working on my GED so I can better myself and my family. Having faith was instilled in me from my parents and I'm thankful for that, since with faith all things are possible. The teachers are great to work with and I thank them for their help.

Juanita Baisden - p. 91

I am a single mother of three and live in Lancaster, OH. I love writing poetry and reading it as well. I have written many pieces, but I never had the opportunity to submit any of them until now. Thanks to my wonderful teacher, I finally had the confidence to do so. My only hope is that one day I can gather my work into a book and have it published. Many of the poems I have written come from my life experiences and inspiration from my children. So, until my kids grow up or run out of ideas, I will keep writing.

Offorie L. Banks - p. 71

My inspiration is life, good and bad. My family and friends have taught me that making a mistake doesn't spell the end. Anyone can change if they really want to, even me.

Kory Barthany - p. 76

Kory plans to take the GED test this spring. He hopes to go to school for Business Management and eventually open a restaurant. Kory is married and has one daughter.

Gaius Birkis - p. 94

Gaius Birkis is a dedicated GED student who enjoys writing. He would like to make his family proud by improving his academic skills and getting his GED.

Mindy Blaney - p. 92**Starlee Bowling - p. 94**

Starlee Bowling came to Scarlet Oaks to earn her GED. She would like to obtain a job working with animals and be able to support her family.

Cheryl Brazie - p. 49

I am an employed grandmother of four delightful girls. I have been married for 37 years. Getting my GED has been a long-time dream of mine and not one that is known by my children or others. At my age it is more for personal satisfaction than anything else. I will continue to find other ways to expand my education in the future.

Chrissi Brown - p. 58

I'm Chrissi and I am 29 years old. I have a 6-year-old son who is in kindergarten. Deep emotional words inspire me to write what is in my heart. Thank you for choosing my words.

Karen Brown - p. 92**Delphine Brunet - p. 35**

I am from France. I moved to the United States six months ago with my family because of my husband's work but also to live a new adventure with our kids. My English is improving thanks to The English Center lessons in Youngstown. Although I am busy with my three children, I love to write and make new friends.

Yolivan Cabrera - cover

I'm from Honduras. My name is Santos Yolivan Cabrera, but my artist name is Yolivan. I have been in the U.S.A. for 2 years and 11 months. I am 40 years old. I love to paint.

Isha Cham - p. 10

Isha Cham was born in Gambia. She came to the United States to further her studies. Language is difficult for her, but she is a dedicated student who will succeed.

Daovadi Chen - p. 79

Daovadi Chen was born in Cambodia and suffered through much turmoil in her country. She came to America for a better life including an education. She is devoted to her family.

Zhihong Chen - p. 33**Vyran Clark - p. 84**

My name is Vyran Clark. I live in Youngstown, Ohio. I have a twin brother named Myran. I am the father of a son named Peyton Clark. After I receive my GED, I plan to continue my education, although I am currently undecided. My passion is writing poetry.

Jackie Colflesh - p. 5

I am a mother of two, and I have two grandchildren. I lost my husband 8 years ago. After losing my job, I decided to go back to school to get my GED to show my family that it is never too late. So with family standing behind me, along with the people at Tolles, I did it. I want my granddaughter Jessie and grandson James to stay in school and reach for their dreams just like I did. God has blessed me in so many ways.

Carolyn Colwell - p. 60**Sharon Cromer - p. 92****Deniz Demircan - p. 96**

My name is Deniz and I am originally from Turkey. My family moved to Germany when I was a child. My first language is Turkish, but I speak German and English as well. I am spending a year in the United States to work as an au pair. I attend ESOL classes at Live Oaks in Milford, Ohio.

Ashley Dingey - p. 59

I'm a big Ohio State fan. I love nature and enjoy working with animals. I'm getting close to my GED Certificate. I am also a fan of Naruto. My family is pushing me to get my GED and to start college this year.

Reginald Eggleton - p. 15

I have been writing all of my life and hope to make it my profession someday. Hopefully, getting my GED will bring me closer to college and to someday owning my own business.

Corne Eksteen - p. 106

I am 24 years old, and I am from South Africa. My first language is Afrikaans. In South Africa, there are eleven different languages, but I can only speak two, Afrikaans and English. At the moment I live in Cincinnati, Ohio, as an au pair, taking care of four children ages 8-18. The reason why I came to the United States of America was to improve my English and to see the world. This is my first time out of South Africa, and I wanted to be closer to my boyfriend (Regardt Ferreira). He is doing his PhD at the University of Louisville, and I would like to dedicate this story to him to thank him for all his help, motivation, and inspiring me to be a better person.

Lais Felix - p. 56, 96

Hello, my name is Lais Marcondes. I am from Brazil, and my first language is Portuguese. I came to the United States to work as an au pair. I have attended Live Oaks in Milford, Ohio, to improve my English.

Gregory Fesko - p. 103

I was born in Romania a long time ago (76 years). I came to the USA as a refugee (thanks to The Helsinki Accords) in 1985 with my wife and two daughters. I was a graphic artist in Romania. I am now retired but continue to do artwork. I am active at The Butler Institute of American Art - Youngstown, Ohio. I became a citizen in 1993.

Karen Flick - p. 11

My name is Karen Flick, and this is my thirteenth year of being published in the Beginnings series. Pierre Frozen Foods makes this possible by providing the Learning Center for me to further my studies. I love coming to the Writers' Conference. It is always a learning experience. I dedicated my writing to my husband Ken and daughters, Cindy and Angel.

Irza Flickinger - p. 51

Irza is from Mexico. One of her many talents is writing. She prefers to write in Spanish, but for this activity she wrote in English. She is also gifted in making jewelry and other hand crafts.

Ronald Fugate - p. 13

I'm a 63-year-old man. I don't drink. I don't smoke. I don't do dope. I'm currently being tutored to learn to read and write. I enjoy writing stories that touch others and express feelings that come from my heart.

Toni Garcia - p. 6, 92

My name is Toni Garcia. I am married with five beautiful children. I have always enjoyed writing, so this is an honor to be published in this book. My long-term goal is to one day be a nurse working in a hospital. I encourage everyone to chase after their dreams until you catch them.

Maria Giuliberti - p. 96

My name is Maria Giuliberti. I was born in Italy in 1961. I came to the United States a couple of years ago. My most important job is as a wife to my husband and mother to my daughter. I also attend Live Oaks in Milford, Ohio, to improve my English.

Dwalyn Green - p. 4

My name is Dwalyn Green, and I live in Youngstown, Ohio. I am 21 years old. After I receive my GED, I plan to further my education. I like to write poetry and hang out with my friends.

Hanoch Grinshpan - p. 40

Hello, my name is Hank and I am from Israel. My first language is Hebrew. I am an electrician by trade, and I also attend English classes at Live Oaks to improve my reading and writing of English.

Lan Kun Guo - p. 9

Sara Hagan - p. 23

Sara is from Brazil. She has two beautiful daughters and a wonderful husband. She keeps busy by helping on the family farm.

Theresa Hall - p. 55

My name is Theresa Hall. I am 58 years old, and I live in Lancaster, Ohio. I like to write poetry and enjoy writing what I see so others can enjoy reading it. I sent my poems to a priest in Minnesota, Father Killian, who is an author himself. He wrote back stating he enjoyed my poems. I have met four other poets, and I have their books. I had my picture taken with one of them, Ted Koosier.

Angela Harmon - p. 82

My name is Angie and I am 30 years old. I am a single mother to a very handsome boy who will be three in January. I am back at school getting my GED. I take my pretest January 19th. After that I plan to go to school for sonography.

Pamela Hernandez - p. 3

My name is Pamela Hernandez, and I'm 22 years old. I am from Mexico. I'm a single mother of one boy. I work as an au pair, and I attend classes at Live Oaks in Milford, Ohio. My goal is to learn and improve my English.

Viola Hershberger - p. 7

I am 26 years old, and I have a wonderful husband. We have had our dog "Rusty" for almost a year now. Things I enjoy are walking, reading, writing, and motorcycles.

Sheila Hightower - p. 62

My name is Sheila Hightower, and I work at Pierre Foods in the packing department. I attend the Learning Center at Pierre, and I enjoy working on the computer and cooking.

Dave Humphries - p. 102

I am a father of four. All of my children have graduated, now it is my turn. I am also a baker. It's a great job, I love baking. My mom would be very proud to see me now.

Cody Hunley - p. 65, 68, 92

I have been attending Live Oaks ABE classes for several months and am very close to obtaining my GED. I am turning my life around and look forward to future successes.

Manal Ilaiyan - p. 45

Manal is married and the mother of three girls. She has been living in the U.S. for 17 years and has been studying English at the English Center for six months.

Lemuel Israel - p. 19

Lemuel Israel, 50, is a GED student at Mercy Neighborhood Ministries in Cincinnati. He served in the U.S. Army in Stuttgart, Germany, from 1976-1979. Lemuel is the owner-operator of the No-Touch Gardening service for homeowners. Writing poetry is his hobby.

Khounkam Khamvongsa - p. 29

My name is Khounkam Khamvongsa. I was born in Laos. I feel so happy that I had a chance to come to America. Now I am a student in the ABE program where I hope to improve my English. I am so happy that I had a chance to write this essay.

Betty Krimmer - p. 96, 119

My name is Betty, and I am a native of Colombia. I have also lived in Ecuador, and my first language is Spanish. I am happy to attend classes at Live Oaks in Milford, Ohio, so that I can improve my reading, writing, speaking, and listening of English. I am hoping to earn my citizenship of the United States of America.

Iglal Kuku - p. 94

Iglal Kuku was born in Sudan and came to the United States ten years ago. She wanted to get an education and eventually open a spa. She enjoys writing.

Juan Leyria - p. 101

My name is Juan Leyria, and I am from Argentina. My first language is Spanish, but my English is improving every day. I work as a DJ in the Cincinnati area. I live in Milford, Ohio, and I attend ESOL classes at Live Oaks.

Yuan Hua Li - p. 81, 96

My name is Yuan Li and I am from China. I have been in the USA for almost one year. When I first came here, it was really hard to get used to it, especially because I could not speak English well. What I learned wasn't just a piece of cake. There are so many problems when you try to take care of a family without speaking English well. I decided to find a school to learn more. Now, I am an ESOL student at Live Oaks. I have met some really nice teachers who are very helpful. I have met some interesting people who are from all over the world. They speak all kinds of languages. They are here to learn English too. Isn't it amazing? English brings us together and I feel so lucky that I am a part of them now. I am working as a housekeeper; it's not an easy job and I can only make a little money. I want to change. You won't have a better life without knowing English and learning American culture. I am eager to learn more.

Yuleidy Lizarazo Alfaro - p. 42

My name is Yuleidy, but everybody calls me Yuly. I am 22 years old, and I am from Bogota, Colombia. I came to the United States as an au pair on January 18, 2009, with a lot of goals in my mind including: improving my English skills, attending a school, watching little kids, living with an American family, making friends, meeting new people, adjusting to a new culture, and sharing mine as well. I have been attending ESOL classes in the morning at Live Oaks for one year. I enjoy learning and living in Cincinnati OH, one of the most beautiful cities in this country. By the way, I want to give special thanks to Susan, Rod, and Julie at Live Oaks for their support and teaching, and also all the special people who are around for me despite the distance. Also, I dedicate my writing to my boyfriend, a wonderful and patient person who is doing a good job teaching me French and English. I am still working on my goals, but I feel that I just took a step ahead with my success in the Ohio Writers' Conference. To my loving family, my parents, and my sisters, I miss all of you from the bottom of my heart. Finally I dedicate my writing to God; without him in my life none of this could be possible.

Lindsay Louis - p. 115

My name is Lindsay and this is my story. I am happily married with a beautiful daughter, Hadassah Bethea. She is here for a reason!

Mario Alexander Martinez - back cover

My name is Mario Alexander Martinez. I am from Honduras and I live in Norwalk, Ohio. I am 27 years old, and I like painting and drawing in pencil.

Rose Mathew - p. 69

My name is Rose Mathew, and I live in Canal Winchester, Ohio. I'm a housewife, and the mother of two children. I am from India.

Crystal McKnight - p. 92

I'm 31 years old but I have lived a life of an older person. I have survived a lot. I was born with cancer; they removed my eye when I was 18 months old, so now I have a glass eye. I have had many other trials and tribulations in my life, but now I am on a path to success. I am married to a wonderful man and have four children, who are my backbone. I look back on my life and all I can say is, "I survived."

Christopher Meier - p. 60, 99

I was born on January 19, 1985, in the frozen tundra of Cincinnati, Ohio, and raised in the sweltering jungles of South Florida. I currently reside in a secret bunker somewhere in the Midwest with my family.

Laura Meiers - p. 75, 92

The road to improving my health, both physically and emotionally, started with improving myself. I earned my GED while making new friends. I continued to come back and help others. The more I can help, the better I feel.

Kevin Mitishin - p. 94

Kevin Mitishin is a student who loves nature. He would like to attend college and incorporate his hands-on personality with a career that involves working outdoors.

Tania Montalban - p. 113

My name is Tania Montalban. I have been living in Ohio for five years. I became a citizen of the United States one year ago. I continue studying English with my teacher, Charlotte Plutt, because I want to be able to speak English.

Ethen Morehead - p. 60**Linda Neal - p. 53**

I am 53 years old and have been married for 34 years. I am a mother of four children and have five grandchildren. I came to ABLE to become better prepared academically for a higher education. I have enjoyed my learning experience with ABLE and will use the valuable skills that I have acquired while attending college. I will be earning an associate degree in Business Management.

Anthony Nichols - p. 92

I am currently attending the GED/ABLE classes at Live Oaks. I am also looking for work at this time and planning to go to school after I earn my GED.

April Norvell - p. 92, 111

I live in Goshen, Ohio. I have a daughter and a son. I would like to get my GED so that I can go farther with my education.

Onasis Pena - p. 31

My name is Onasis Pena. I was born in Bajos De Haina, Dominican Republic in 1975. I have completed my college degree in accounting. I am married and I have two boys. The 12 year old, Francis, was born in the Dominican Republic. The 6 year old was born in Columbus, Ohio. Both of my children are bilingual. Since 2009 I have worked at a call center as a collector where I have a challenge every day.

Alex Price - p. 60**Doug Rasnick - p. 92**

Lebert Reid - p. 21

Lebert was born and raised in Jamaica. He came to the United States to marry his wife, Shanell. He loves to spend time with family and cook.

Jasmin Reinmoeller - p. 60**Sara Revilla - p. 96**

My name is Sara Revilla. I am from Lima, Peru. I have three children whose ages are 15, 14, and 5. We came to Cincinnati six years ago for my husband's job at the University of Cincinnati. I graduated from law school in my native country. Now I am a housewife, and I attend classes at Live Oaks in Milford, Ohio, to learn English. Knowing English helps me to be able to help my kids with their homework. While we are living in the USA, I want to continue to learn more about this culture and its history.

Velia Ripperger - p. 36

"I have always wanted to write my feelings but never knew I could do it," said Velia, Ripperger, who has lived in the United States for 37 years. Velia is a wonderful devoted wife and mother of two daughters and grandmother of one who is inspired to keep writing. She plans to write more and hopes to one day have enough material to put together a book. "I don't care if I have to give it away," she said. "There is just so much life out there to write about. I believe we all can do what I've done and share it with the world."

Juana Rueda - p. 73

My name is Juana Rueda. I am from Mexico City. I have lived in Columbus, Ohio, for fourteen years. I am an American citizen. I am studying because I want to improve my English and try to become a police officer so that I can help people.

Claudia Rust - p. 92

I am a mother of four and a grandmother of four grandsons. I decided to come to the ABLE class to get my GED so I can be a nurse's aide because I love to help people.

Denis Rust - p. 92**Abdelrahaman Saleh - p. 117**

My name is Abdelrahaman Saleh. I'm from Colombia. I'm 34 years old, and I speak Spanish and Arabic. I'm a physician. I was working in my country as a doctor in a hospital and sometimes in an ambulance. I have been living in Cincinnati, Ohio, for 7 months. When I came to the USA, my English was very poor. I didn't know how to speak with people, but I began to learn English on a computer. Then somebody told me about ESOL classes at Live Oaks. Since I've been attending I can understand and speak a bit more English. Right now I'm studying and practicing for a USMLE test so I can work here in the future.

Hikaru Sato - p. viii**Caralissa Scott - p. 83**

My name is Caralissa Scott. I am from Youngstown, Ohio. I am a 23-year-old single mother of a 4-year-old son named Kevin Clinkscale, Jr. After I get my GED, I plan to go to school to become an ultra-sound tech. I like to cook, sing, talk on the phone, and spend time with family and friends.

Zambia Sherland - p. 10

Zambia Sherland recently moved to the United States from Jamaica. He would like to get his GED so that he can take advantage of all the wonderful opportunities in America.

Fabiana Silva - p. 96

My name is Fabiana, and I'm from Brazil. I decided to become an au pair because it was a great opportunity to improve my English, to meet new people, and discover a different country. It supports my profession since I'm a graduate in Tourism in my home country of Brazil. Studying at Live Oaks gave me the opportunity to practice 180 hours of English and also to meet many good friends! It was the best choice that I have made, and now I can get a better job upon my return to Brazil!

Marketa Slaughter - p. 105

My name is Marketa Slaughter and I am from Dayton, Ohio. My favorite food is pizza. I love to cook and I love reading to my children, Italy and Donte Jr. I have written two poems in my life, *Like Coffee* and *My Sister*. I never knew I was a writer until we had our first writing workshop at Godman Guild. That goes to show that you never know what you can do until you try.

Birkita Tesfageris - p. 14

I am from the country of Eritrea in East Africa. I now live in Cincinnati, Ohio. I worked for the TFE Company, but I was laid off in 2009. I am a mother of four: three boys ages 10, 11, 12, and a 5-year-old little girl. The inspiration for everything in my life is my children and my husband. I can't imagine life without them. I am looking forward to helping my children by getting my GED, and that is the key to my success for my future education.

Jerry Tharp - p. 92**Michaela Thomas - p. 10**

Michaela Thomas is a devoted mother of two children who are very supportive of her finishing her education. She will be taking her GED test this spring and fulfilling a lifelong dream.

Tina Toporcer - p. 85

Tina just earned her GED in January and plans to further her education. She is married and has three children.

Janeth Urgilez - p. 10

Janeth Urgilez was born in Ecuador. She had to work hard to come to the United States and get an education. She would like to go to nursing school and secure a career where she will be able to help people.

Billy Wagner - p. 61, 92

Greetings. I'm a 35-year-old man on the road to higher education. I never knew I could write until I tried it for the first time at Live Oaks ABLE/GED class. It is my hope that whoever reads this finds that though the road back for some of us is hard, it is not impossible. Don't give up!

Benny Wang - p. 95**Chris Ware - p. 72**

Chris Tyron Ware was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. He has a four-year-old son named Zakyi. His younger sister's name is Linda, same as his mother's. He is an aspiring writer, musician, and poet.

Ling Zhu - p. 25

Ashley Hall	Mario Martinez
Lisa Harper	Vilma Martinez
James Harris	Rosalba McCain
Torrance Hawkins	Michelle McDew
Brittany Heeter	Hugh McGrew
Stacey Heller	Megebnsn Mengestu
Amber Henry	Alin Mihaila
Julio Herrera	Mihai Mocanu
Debra Hickson	Shirley Montgomery
Yolanda Hightower	Yuka Morimoto
Donna Hines	Nicole Mosier
Ahmed Hjayyer	Tabie Myers
Fatemeh Hosseinipour	Zeina Nader
Patricia Hoyos	Iryna Nedoshytko
Zhixiong Huang	Nathan Noe
Roxann Hyde	Lourdes Nunez
Awilda Ibrahim	Maria Obugene
Hayfa Ilayan	Ana Carolina Oliveira
Catalina Izquierdo	Melissa Opincar
Jessica Jackson	Chasity Parks
Mona Jawhari	Joaquin Perez
Martha Jiminez	Maria Perez
Christopher Johnson	Yolanda Perez
Tonia Jones	Chante Perry
Elena Kamienski	Cheryl Pete
Yuka Katayama	Linh Pham
Jeanne Keller	Tri Pham
Sumalee Kennedy	Bertha Popovich
Sevada Kobyan	Sandy Radcliff
Maria Laguer	Rajbinder Randaur
Herminia Lamatrice	Lisa Reynolds
Charles Lawson Jr.	Jana Rice
Monty Lester	Stacey Rice
Ella Lewis	Yavanoot Robbins
Geraldine Lewis	Ebony Robinson
Chheng Lim	Anthony Rodriguez
Wenrong Liu	Michael Rohrbaugh
Mary Majano	Marysia Rosier
Suzette Malave	Natalia Rotar

Elizabeth Rueda
Tomas Ruiz
Elizabeth Sacksith
Andrii Samar
Miguel Sandavol
Constancia Scharff
Cordell Schultz
Linda Seymour
Olga Shadina
Oksana Shkodzinska
Anthony Sinito
Lyubov Smetanyuk
Derrick Smith
Mindy Smith
Zahra Smith
Kiara "Kiwi" Spencer
Olga Stepanova
Leslie Strodes
Jasmine Stuart
Wendy Sullivan
Doreen (So Chia) Taylor
William Taylor
Maria Tirado
Roksolana Tkachyk
Lillied Torres
Marta Tracewska
Mamiko Ukai
Darlene Underwood
Luis Vazquez
Josh Veach
Carlos Velez
Hannable Venable
Sade` Vinson
Constantinescu Vlad
Elizabeth Wade
Jessica Ward
Peggy Weldon
Alena Westfall
Sharon Westfall

Dale Whitesell
Diennetta Williams
Coreal Wilson
Kim Wilson
Jessica Wood
Jamila Worthey
Afi Wozufia
Takeo Yamamoto
Zhongqiu Yang Yang
Mohamed Youseff
Ivan Zakharko
Maria Zamora
Fanor Zapata

