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# COMMUNITY CENTRAL

Stories, Essays, Poetry and News from the BTSD Tutoring Program

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Issue 4

Winter 2016

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## ***What's New in Basic Studies?***

*Peter Frankland*

Welcome to the fourth issue of Community Central! This quarter the Talk Time Conversation Group met twice a week and talked about current events, International Women's Day, things that make them laugh, and much more. Some students also started a club for BTSD students to support each other and these students organized the first graduation for students in our division.

As always, thank you to all of the students and tutors who have shared their writing and to all the faculty and staff who have made this newsletter possible! If you want to include your writing in next quarter's newsletter, please let us know!

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# Perseverance: *A quality that allows someone to continue trying to do something even though it is difficult*

## ***My Grandfather: a person with grit***

*Pablo Vargas*

My grandfather was a very important person to me, because he showed me that with effort and perseverance he had achieved all his goals despite the difficulties of life. According to Angela Lee



Duckworth, some of the most successful people have Grit.

My grandfather was named Isidro Osvaldo Vargas de Sotomayor Hidalgo. He was born in Moca, Puerto Rico on August, 11 1929. My grandfather grew up in a really poor family in Puerto Rico. My great grandfather was a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army. When my grandfather was 3 years old, he moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He studied in a US Army school. His dream was always to be a medical surgeon. By the time he finished high school, he had started the medical school.

In 1950, the US Army gave him the opportunity to finish his medical specialty in Spain instead of going to the Korean War. When he was in Spain, he met my grandmother in Granada and then they got married. When he finished his specialty,

he had begun to practice as a surgeon in a hospital in Granada. Also, when my father was born in 1955, my grandfather went to a US Army base in Germany for 2 years as a surgeon.

After all these years, my grandfather built a laboratory, which was one of the best in Southern Spain at that time. Finally, my grandfather was one of the most recognized professors in the faculty of medicine of Granada.

My grandfather was a person with grit who got everything he set out for his life. He worked really hard and with perseverance.

My grandfather's challenges were to become a great doctor and have a wonderful family. My grandfather overcame these challenges because he worked really hard and he had a lot of perseverance.

When I think about my grandfather, he inspires me to desire to fight hard for a better future. When I was little, he always told me that the difficulties of life don't matter. You always need to have challenges, you always have to fight hard and if you fall you can get up. Nothing is impossible in life as long as you have perseverance.

He died on the same date as his birthday in 1999 with Parkinson's.

Nothing is impossible in life, don't you think? Every single person can achieve their goals. Let's work hard! Let's be constants! We need to have perseverance!

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*This quarter students in ESL 5A wrote about people they know who show perseverance*

## ***The Power of Believing in Your Life Turns on the Light at Any Time of Darkness.***

*Isabel Lopez*

I want to write about the person who is the strongest example of perseverance in my life. My mentor is my mother. She taught me by example, that every day is an opportunity to do one's best and improve one's skills.



I don't think that I have enough space in the newsletter to write about the entire life of my mother. I want to write about only one period of my mother's life.

My mother always worked a lot. She started working at 7 years old. She got married when she was very young. My father was much older than my mother. My father beat and abused my mother. Her life was difficult.

My mother had two children before me, my two brothers America and Jaime, but when she was pregnant with me, my father beat her.

When I was born the people in the hospital thought I was still born or I had trouble breathing. My mother waited for me in the

hospital to have me in her arms.

Time passed and they never gave me to her. A nurse came to my mother and said you have to give a name to the baby because we have to do the death papers. My mother cried and cried. And then a doctor came to my mother and spoke to her.

He said "don't worry, we will do everything possible for your daughter. Go home and return tomorrow.

My mother went home to take care of her other children. She then cleaned the house and cried and cried, prayed and prayed. The following day she returned to the hospital where I was in an incubator, connected to many tubes and oxygen.

The doctor said to my mother: "I think she will live." And I stayed in the hospital for 6 more months. My mother went every day to the hospital to feed me. She was confident that God had a solution in His hands. So, the months passed.

When at last I left the hospital. I was very small and thin. But I know, that it was because the faith of my mother, her love and her perseverance that I survived.

I have always seen my mother as the most beautiful woman in the world and I am very happy that she is my mother because with her example I have been able to live the life of perseverance and hard work. She has always motivated me to have faith and to achieve.

My mother has always said "after the storm, comes tranquility"

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## My Grandfather

*Elias Martinez*

I want to talk about my grandfather. He was one of the people that liked to fight for his goals and dreams. He was a character who had passion, a strong head and strong beliefs. Let me tell you about the history of my grandfather and his goals.



When he was 18 years old he had big goals for his future. He always wanted to have a ranch, but he was really poor. He didn't have a plan to build his future; he was a rookie. He got married when he was 18 years old. He didn't have a house or land that he could build his house on, so he and my grandmother had to live under a tree. His intuition told him he needed to do something to have a better life. In his head a plan was emerging to have a better future.

He started to work hard. His life had small changes. He had a baby, a small house, and some small pieces of land that he could work on. He felt like a new beginning. One day he met an old man. This helped my grandfather to be more successful.

My grandfather taught a lot of things; for example, perseverance, how to make a plan and be smarter because my grandfather didn't have an education when he was a kid. When my grandfather was out of town my uncles and aunts took care of the house and the farm that he had.

After 25 years my grandfather noticed that his children had a better life and a better future. He didn't have to work for someone else. Now he had his own house, and his children could build a better future. My grandfather was always demanding that his children need to be successful in their lives and he gave a lot of advice of how they could be successful. I had a lot of advice from my grandfather, he told me everything in his life, and he didn't want to see me be a loser. He taught me all the experience that he had. The first lesson was "life without plans". He didn't have a plan when he was young. Advice, support, strategies, experience, passion, and education, all those things made my grandfather have a hard life because he didn't have somebody to tell him what to do, how to live the life, how to fight in this world and how to live this life easier. He had to do everything by himself, it was hard but not impossible.

My grandfather was there to save me all this process. He advised me; be smart, learn from the oldest, don't make the same mistakes of others. Have a plan for your life. Working hard is the way that you can be successful. Work for yourself, not for others. Be independent. Don't give up your dreams, even if they are difficult. Be prepared for this life, keep in mind that life is not easy, but not impossible and pick up good things that can help you in your life. All this advice helped me day to day. He saved me a lot of time and bad experiences. I am working hard to make my dreams a reality. Dreams are difficult but not impossible.

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# Winter 2016 Basic and Transitional Studies Division Graduation!

*Friday March 18th, 2016*

*12:30 pm - 2:00 pm*

*Eriksen Theater - 1525 Harvard Ave*



Come celebrate student achievement with caps, robes, certificates and light snacks!

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# TUTOR REFLECTIONS

## ***A Tutor and a Student***

*Abuzeinab Musa Abuzeinab Muhamed*

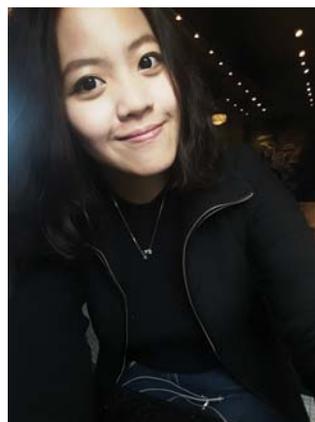
I am from Sudan, Africa. No one can imagine how I came to Seattle Central College in the first place. I met a unique teacher, Joanna Elizondo at the Downtown Emergency Services Center (DESC) and she instantly encouraged me to be enrolled in her course at the DESC shelter.



Not only that, she even brought me to the tutoring center and she left a word of praise about my teaching skills and recommended that I become a tutor. Peter welcomed the idea and gave me one student to start with. It was a fruitful experience because I gained a lot from it. Knowledge is power and the influence of a good teacher remains with students as long as they live.

I am deeply grateful to my classmates in the DESC class, who have been competitive and cooperative. I am also indebted to the desk staff at DESC. This course could not have been successful without their generous help of funding it. I am particularly grateful to Seattle Central College for admitting me as a student and giving me the chance to be a tutor. A word of thanks must go to my computer instructor

Mrs. Debbie McLaughlin for the valuable information on computer science. To my special teacher, Joanna Elizondo, whose magical patience and wisdom continue to work wonders and of course for her ceaseless efforts make it all work. I say thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you for helping the dream continue and opening all the doors of success for me.



## ***The Change***

*Pallas Wang*

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

Perhaps I will not be the one who turns the world upside down; perhaps I am just another representative of the ordinary; perhaps I will never be Mahatma Gandhi. Nevertheless, I am here in the world because I can make a change; I can be the extraordinary within the ordinary; although I cannot be the one who saves thousands of lives from perishing, I can be the reason for another person’s smile. I can start from changing the instants in my everyday surroundings because by doing this, I know that I am doing my part of being an individual in the world – making the world a better place.

Elizabeth Palmer Peabody was the one

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who established the first English-language kindergarten in the United States of America. The institution was built in 1860, in the era which women did not have much power to do with making differences in society. And Yet Peabody made herself the exception. As an educator, she successfully spread the idea of generalizing child education. A step like this is seemingly insignificant, yet was in fact an astounding move in that time period. I have always supposed that educators are great people who wish to make a change. Nevertheless, I never thought of myself being a part of them one day. Today, working at Basic Studies Tutoring Program hands me an opportunity to be the change I want to see in the world - to create an environment in which people can struggle with languages less and embrace communication more.

I have come to realize the fact that everything is simpler when it is judged by its cover. Being an ESL tutor is much complicated than I expect it to be. Although I have some basic experience tutoring both children and adults in English, it is different when tutoring in my own language, Mandarin and in my second language. I will always have to find ways to define one word using other synonyms or phrases in order to communicate with students while going over their homework assignments. Not only did I learn from the process of tutoring, I also enhanced my English skills by defining the English words in English. I am utterly glad that teaching became a part of me. Although this is just a small part which is seemingly insignificant, I believe that one day I will be able to apply what I learned from the experience to my career in the future.

One of my students is a best example to illustrate women's desire to obtain knowledge. She is a hardworking woman who is willing to put her time and effort in her own education because she believes that the true better quality of life comes from knowledge. In the process of teaching, not only did I learn from improving myself as an educator, I learned from her courage and determination to push herself to continue studying her second language at the age of forty-five. As a woman from Ethiopia, she grasps her chance to pursue education in a nation like America, takes advantage of her rights here, and spend time and effort on building her language skills. There are times in which she appears tired from work, yet she still comes to the center like usual. Although I often tell her not to worry about not memorizing all of the vocabularies at once, she would still write those words in her notebook repetitively. Watching her unremitting efforts, I tell myself to hold on to the moment and push myself to break through my limits. Learning never stops, when it does, there is no more need for staying in the world.

Limits are always there to be pushed through; impossibilities are always there to be defeated. Just like women from the American Revolution, she longs for breakthroughs, and so do I. Facing extreme circumstances back then, women back in the days still fought to strive. Today, without those obstacles, women, regardless of their age, can choose the path they want for their lives. I admire her courage of choosing her own path of life, and I will also, in the future, endeavor to find and achieve my goals on my own chosen path.

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## A Tutor's Reflection

Nayoon Lee

I am very honored to share my experience of tutoring during Winter Quarter for the Basic and Transitional Studies Division.



I took an International Studies class this quarter and there was an opportunity to volunteer to help ESL students. Before I started tutoring, I did not want to be a teacher for a student though, I wanted to be a friend who helps and supports. I knew that teaching is not easy at all and it takes a lot of energy and effort. I was worried that I would not be very passionate and energetic at first and so I hesitated to apply to the program, since it was my first quarter in college and my first experience to tutor. However, my mother said, "Isn't it good for you to help someone?" and "what a pleasure!" When I heard that, I decided I would start tutoring. My student was Ana Claro from Brazil. I told her that I would not be a perfect teacher but I would do my best.

My tutoring was thankfully an unforgettable opportunity. I have studied in the United States for three years. When I first came to the U.S., I was too shy to talk to people at first, because I was not good at speaking in English and I was afraid of getting along with my classmates. However, one of my classmates wanted to volunteer to help me improve my English skills. My classmate and I met three times a week and we talked about the math

terms in English, grammar structures, writing styles and so on. If she did not help me at that time, I would have given up studying in the U.S. and I might not be here at Seattle Central to start my first quarter. While I helped my student, I felt that this program was very helpful and beneficial for students. Not only did my student learn some things from me, but I also learned about myself. Since my student usually had homework in each class, she brought some questions to me. I helped her solve the problems mostly, but there were some questions that I could not answer. When I was in that situation, I visited my English 101 professor after I finished the meeting with my student. Thus, my professor taught me the things that I got confused about and that I did not know then my student learned them in our next tutoring meeting. It was very good review for myself and it was a wonderful chance to interact with my student by talking about the questions she brought.

Thank you very much to my friend, Ana who was the best listener ever for me. I was very lucky to share my knowledge and experience with her this quarter. I am looking forward to continuing to volunteer next quarter!

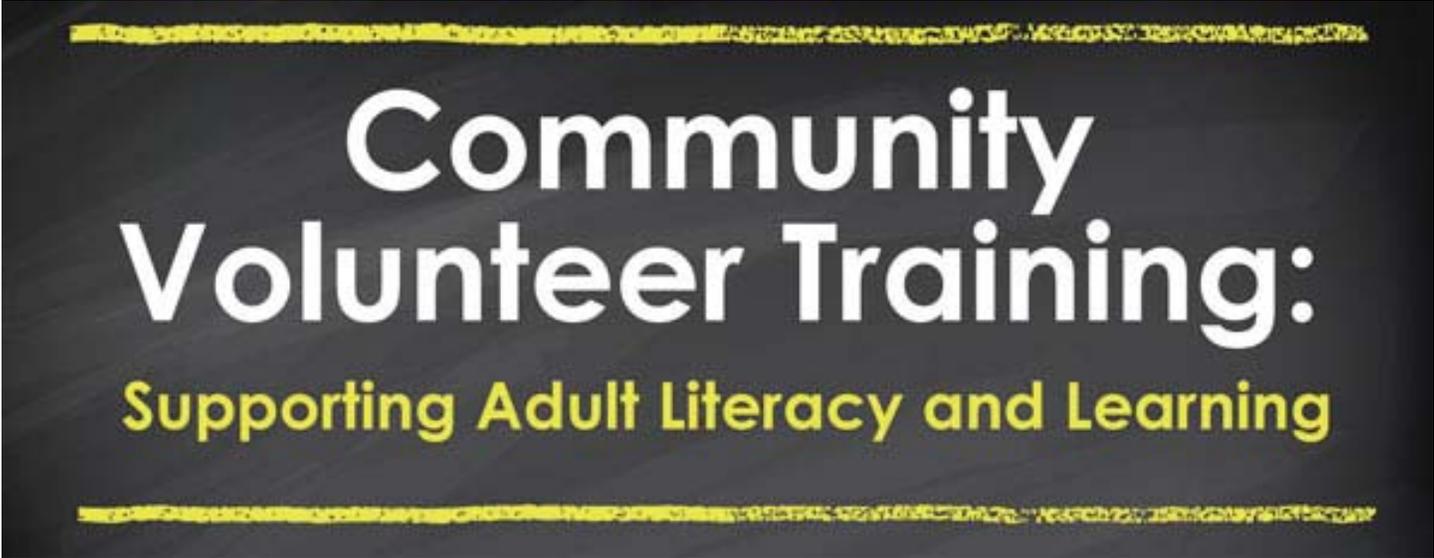
## TALK TIME

*Come join us for English conversation club in room BE3189*

*Tuesdays and Thursday*

*1:00 pm - 2:00 pm*

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A black rectangular graphic with yellow brushstroke-like borders at the top and bottom. The text is centered and reads: "Community Volunteer Training: Supporting Adult Literacy and Learning".

# Community Volunteer Training:

Supporting Adult Literacy and Learning

## **A Day of Free Workshops and Conversations to Support ESL and ABE Students in Greater King County**

*Saturday, April 2, 2016*

*8:30 am - 3:00 pm*

*Goodwill Job Training & Education Center  
700 Dearborn Place S., Seattle, WA 98144*

*Workshops include planning lessons for English Language Learners, facilitating ESL conversation groups, immigrants and refugees in our communities, engaging beginning readers, and much more!*

*For more information, including a workshop descriptions please talk to Peter!*

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# Expectations . Your hopes for what a person . place, or situation will be like.

*Hasiya Mashalla*

*Saida Abdille*

I did know about this country before I came here. I thought it was full of gold and the people ate fast food and were very patriotic. I thought everything would be big and overshadow the concept of quality. They have freedom, they have justice and a person can do whatever he wants to do. He has no limits, he can reach high. I thought that the American people and their government were against Muslims and hated the religion.

Now that I live in America it is a wonderful place that could be so much better. It is a nation of great hopes, great possibilities and great people. It is a place for women's rights having a legal system you can trust, and having an honest government. Not every person carries cash. Parents can get arrested for physically punishing their children. The USA is better than my country when it comes to having more opportunities to earn a good living. I don't agree that you can purchase alcohol unless you are 21, but you can purchase a gun if you are 18.

The difference from my expectations is that America is not full of gold. The only way you can get gold is if you work hard and get enough money. Also, I was surprised that people don't really care about FIFA-world cup. I found it amazing the way traffic behaved without any intervention from traffic policeman. It is very different from my home country.

Now I know that both American people and their government like Muslims and their religion. There a really nice people! In general people are extremely polite.

I never had many expectations for this country, but what people said and what I see are quite different. I see a big difference. I was expecting so see equality but whatever they say and whatever they write is not the same. I was expecting to see only white people, but I see different colors.

My expectation was to get free education, but everything valuable, like higher education, costs money. Higher education always costs money, but entertainment is free. I don't think this is good for anyone.

The public schools are free, but the curriculum is not very educational. Also, I thought it was safe here, but it is not true. I was expecting to live in a safe place. However, many immigrants feel in a cage, because the law does not work for them, no matter their color or their beliefs. In addition, many are affected by what Trump is saying. I am shocked by the crazy things I hear on the news. I fled civil war in my own country. Coming to this country I was seeking freedom. However, I noticed in this country they promise freedom of speech, but this is a trick, and it is not true because many people get in trouble for vocalizing their ideas or their beliefs.

I was expecting that the justice system wouldn't lean with those with power. But I realized that the people that have the power have all the rights and the people that don't never get the same justice just like in my country.

I LOVE AMERICA!!!!

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Finally I wonder how many presidents in the world get in office and how the civilian population accepts it. I wish we could get good presidents that know their jobs: how to deal with the world and make our countries better. I would like it if we got a president who knows how to manage his job, and has knowledge of his job. I really don't appreciate how people with money can do whatever because that is not helping our country, our people, or the outside world.

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## ***When I Was a Child***

*Hao Nguyen*

When I was a child, I saw poor children my same age didn't go to school. I asked my mom "why are they not going to school?" and my mom said "because they don't have money." I saw poor children do different work. The sold a lotto ticket, shoeshine, beg. They didn't have a parent. Many parents didn't have a lot of money because my country did not have free money. When we went to school, we were paying for every month of school and books and paper. In 2000, there was a state program called "Poverty Alleviation and Classes for Poor Children." Poverty alleviation meant: poor people had a sponsor, every month 120 Vietnamese Dong and class for poor children meant: free school every night. Many poor parents were very happy, because all children went to school and they knew how to read and write.



## ***Lovely Childhood***

*Ibtisam Mohamed*

When I was a child, I loved to help my mother at home. One Monday morning, my mother was very sick, so I cleaned the house and cooked lunch. When some visitors came to visit my mom, I made coffee for the guests. My mother was very happy. I did wonderful things, I felt very happy and very tired.

After the happened, my mother always asked me to make coffee for visitors. I didn't want to, but my mother always asked me, "Please make coffee for the guests" each time. I was so mad. Why did my mother always ask me to make coffee? When I was in the kitchen, I thought "What should I do?"

I decided to put something strange in the coffee. I made the coffee with salt. The taste was very bad. The guests couldn't drink the coffee, and my mother was very nervous. It was a very interesting story.

After this happened, my mother never asked me to make coffee again. My mother always remembers this story.

## **NEED HELP?**

*The drop-in tutor is available to help students in room 3122*

*Monday - Friday  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Thursday & Friday  
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm*

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# SHARE YOUR WRITING IN COMMUNITY CENTRAL

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*Stories, Essays, Poetry and News from the BTSD Tutoring Program*



## *What is Community Central?*

Community Central is a newsletter for the Basic and Transitional Studies Division Tutoring Program. We want to share your stories, poems, or essays about your experience with education, your motivation to learn or teach, your hopes and goals or broader issues in society that affect you.

## *Who can submit?*

Students and tutors in the Basic and Transitional Studies Division.

## *How do I submit my writing?*

Please e-mail your work to [BasicStudiesTutoring@gmail.com](mailto:BasicStudiesTutoring@gmail.com) by March 4th. Submissions should be less than 500 words.

## *Questions?*

Please stop by room 3124 to talk to Peter or Erika.