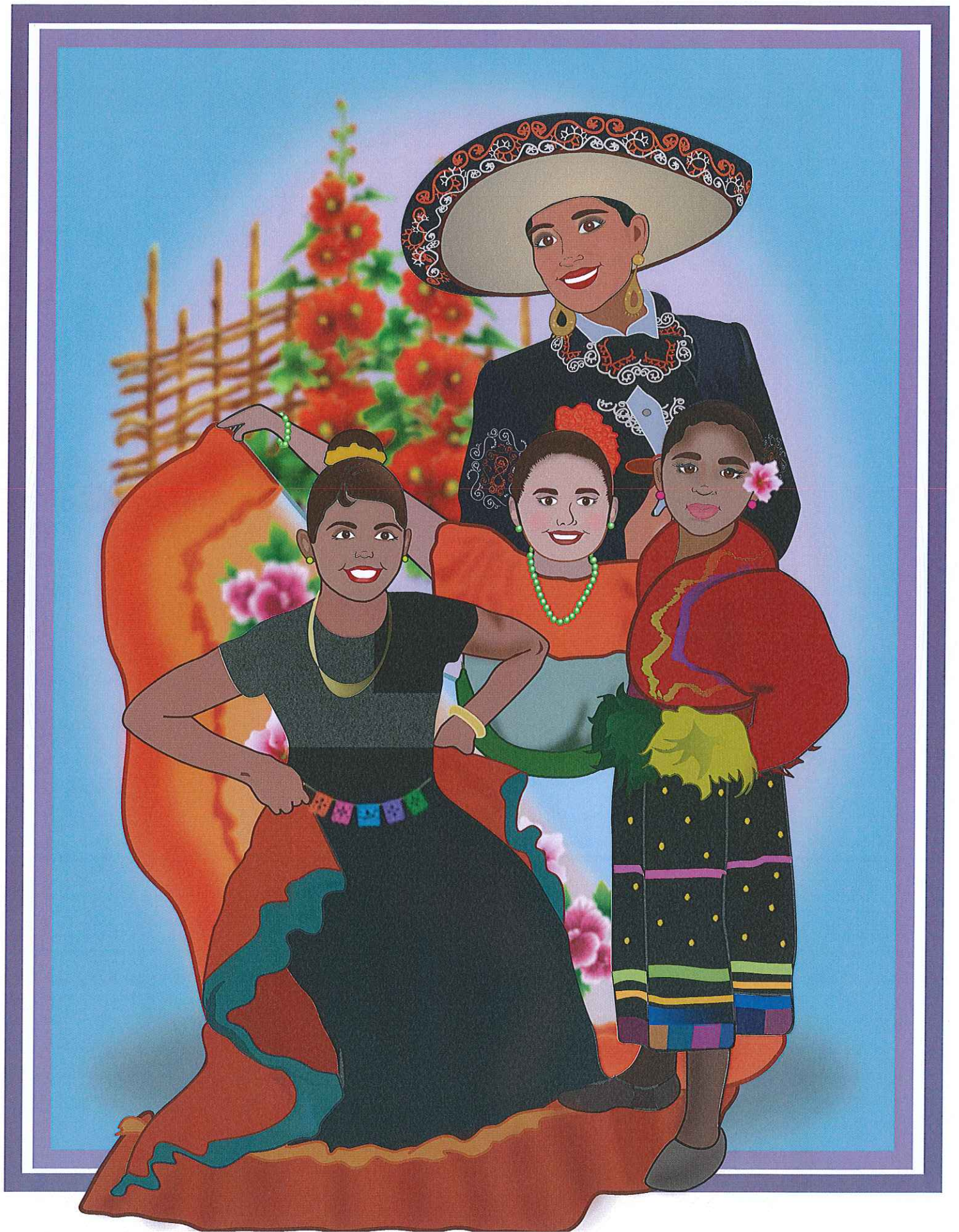






A CULTURAL CENTER IS BORN

(By Veronica Robles)

How did you get interested in entertainment?

1

Singing brought me here. It also gave me a lot of satisfaction and opened a lot of opportunities. I've been able to learn the folklore, customs, traditions, music and the dances of different parts of Mexico and Latin America. I fell in love with all of it. I discovered that the traditions that are involved in dance and music come from our morals and family values.

How did you get interested in Mariachi?

2

I saw *La Virgen de Guadalupe* as my Godmother. People sing this kind of music to her. One day, a group invited me to sing with them in front of a crowd. I enjoyed it! I was dressed from head to toe as a "charro" and I loved it. I enjoy Mexican music. I identify with this music and relate it to a life filled with happiness. Mariachi music holds a special place in my heart.

Why reach out to children?

3

One day, I realized that the children's roots and culture, together with their family values, is what I really love and was passionate about. That is why I created the Veronica Robles Cultural Center, or VROCC. I want VROCC to be a place where children can have fun, learn discipline and dance. We teach the girls how to be elegant and the boys how to be gentleman. I like this work, because it gives me the opportunity to teach the children "how to not forget" about their roots and how important their roots are for their future. They will always have their family's traditions and morals in their hearts. If they are put in a negative situation, they will think of their family and of the values they were taught.

Why is culture so important?

4

It is very important that we do not lose our culture because it is what makes this country. People need to learn English because the opportunities are in English. But keeping our language, customs, folklore and music, is also important because there are many opportunities for bi-lingual people. Our culture plays a big role in this country. As parents, it is our responsibility to pass our traditions and have our children practice and know their native language.

What do you want children to feel when they come to VROCC?

5

I want them to come here and feel as if they have a place in where they can still feel at home. When children arrive to United States from their countries, they get pressured from other children to change their way of being. We try to help them get used to the culture change but still stay true to their family values. When a child carries their culture to an academic setting, it opens an array of possibilities. As adults, we don't want our children to be ashamed of not knowing their language and customs.

Where are the children from?

6

Most of our children are from Mexico, Central America, Perú and Colombia.

What do the parents gain from their children going to VROCC?

7

Our priorities are folklore, customs, music, and a place where children and parents go to learn, share and keep their family values. When the children are here, the parents want to know what their children are wearing, dancing and the tradition of that dance. This opens a bridge of communication between children, parents and grandparents. The children feel proud when they are sharing their experience.

A) Choose the correct verb

Directions: Fill in the blank with the correct verb

discovered	sing	learned	opened
------------	------	---------	--------

1. Veronica liked to _____. It _____ a lot of opportunities. She _____ folklore, customs, traditions, music and the dances of different places. She _____ that our morals and family values are in music.

loved	enjoyed	saw	sing	invited
-------	---------	-----	------	---------

2. She _____ La Virgen de Guadalupe as her grandmother. People _____ Mariachi to La Virgen. A group _____ Veronica to sing in front of a crowd and she _____ it. She also _____ to dress in "charro."

keep	want
------	------

3. Veronica reaches out to children because she doesn't _____ them to forget about their roots. She wants them to _____ their family morals and traditions in their hearts.

need	pass	makes
------	------	-------

4. Culture _____ this country. We _____ to keep our traditions and language because there are many opportunities for bi-lingual people. This is why it is important to _____ our traditions and language to our children

help	doesn't want	want
------	--------------	------

5. Veronica _____ the children to feel at home at VROCC. She _____ them get used to the new culture. She also _____ children to feel ashamed of not knowing their culture.

A Cultural Center is Born

to be

6. The children _____ from Mexico, Central America, Perú and Colombia

feel	learn	open
------	-------	------

7. When the children go to VROCC, the parents _____ what their children are doing. It _____ communication between family members. The children _____ proud of their work at VROCC.

B) Pronoun clarification

Directions: write the correct phrase in what "IT" is referring to in the sentences

this work	their culture	our culture	singing in front of a crowd	singing
-----------	---------------	-------------	-----------------------------	---------

1. Paragraph 1: It also gave me a lot of satisfaction and opened a lot of opportunities. _____
2. Paragraph 2: I enjoyed it! _____
3. Paragraph 3: I like this work, because it gives me the opportunity to teach the children "how to not forget" about their roots and how important their roots are for their future. _____
4. Paragraph 4: It is very important that we do not lose our culture because it is what makes this country. _____
5. Paragraph 5: When a child carries their culture to an academic setting, it opens an array of possibilities. _____

C) Traditions (class discussion)

Directions: write ideas in a separate piece of paper

Traditions don't have to do with just culture. It can be something we always do in our daily lives with our family.

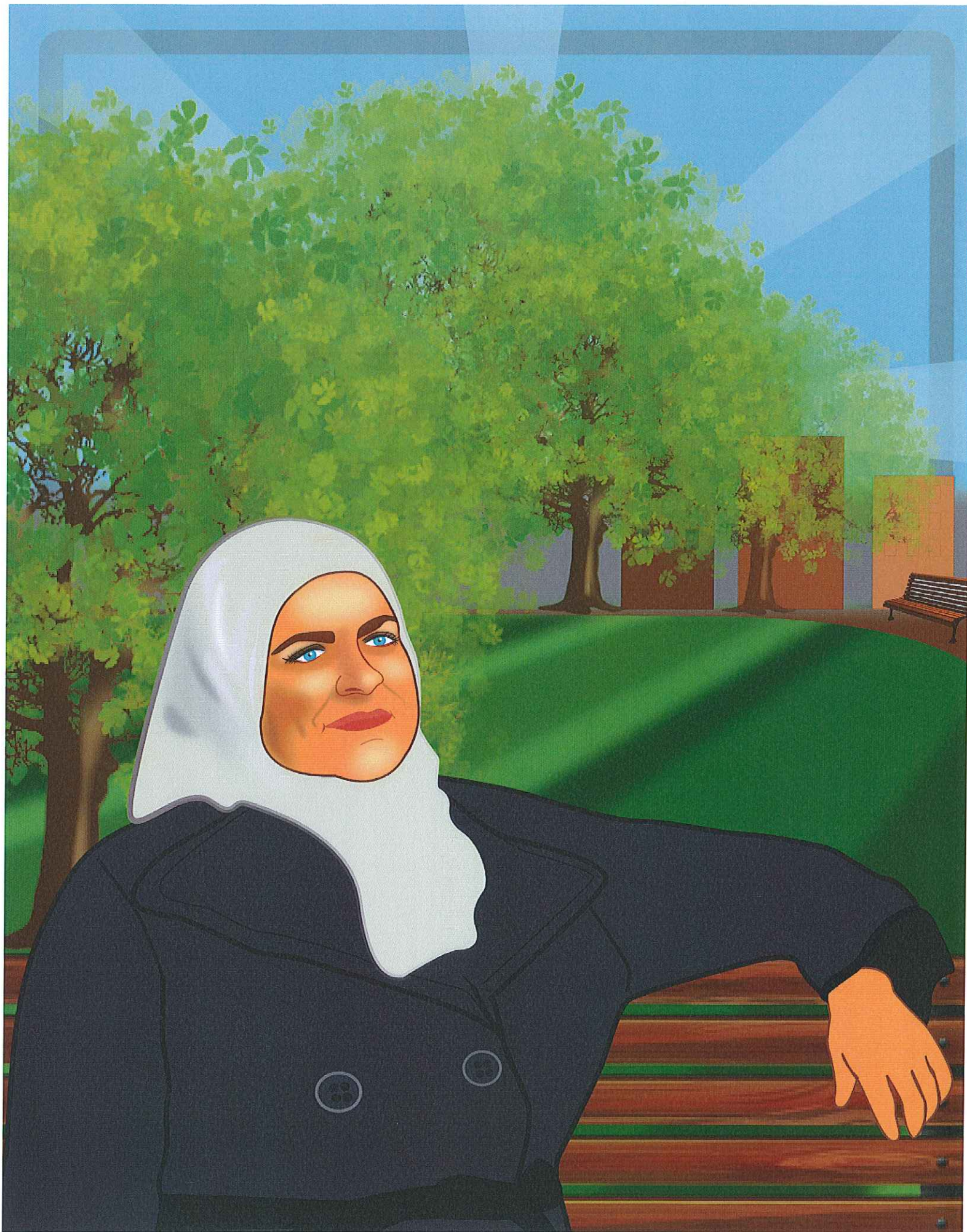
1. What are some traditions you want your children to learn from your culture?
2. What are some traditions you do with our family that has nothing to do with culture?
3. What are some traditional foods that your children love? What are traditional plates you want your children to learn how to cook?

D) Opinion (individual, then class discussion)

Directions: write your ideas

Who am I?

How do you define yourself? Who are you? How does your family or children see you?





NEVER STOP LEARNING

(By Farah Kayek)

1

Hello everybody, my name is Farah Hayek. I am from Syria but I became an American Citizen. I am glad that I was able to become a citizen of the United States. In Syria, I was an Arabic teacher. I finished high school in Biology and this helps me in Math and Science. I have four children, three girls and one boy. One of my kids was born in Syria, but the other three were born here. My husband was living here first and I used to travel to come visit him.

2

In 2008, we came to the United States and stayed here because of the problems in my country. We choose to live in East Boston because it's close to downtown and you could find a good apartment for a good price.

3

I wanted to keep learning English and was always looking for cheap classes. I searched and searched and my daughter helped me and we found one at Bunker Hill for about \$400. That was a lot of money.

4

One day in 2014, someone at the Paris Street gym told me "There are English classes at the Harborside. You know, the Umana School?" - "Yes, I know it," I said. I went that same day to ask them about the classes. The lady there said that there were 400 people on their waiting list, and I was like, "400!" Four days after I had gone to the Harborside, I got a call from a teacher. She asked me if I wanted to meet her and I said yes. We met and I started taking classes with her. I took Level 1 with her. In class, I listened and heard words but speaking and reading was easy for me. I have a problem with grammar.

5

I don't have any time to practice at home because I am always busy. I have four children and I have a lot of things to do. I am the family driver, cook and mom. My kids speak Arabic at home because they have to speak their language. When I am driving, I turn the radio on so I can listen to English. When I used to go to the clinic, my husband came with me to help me understand. But now, I tell him no and that I want to go by myself.

I remember the first TV programs I watched. It was "The Price is Right" and "Wheel of Fortune" in 1995. I watched them every day. I liked them and I think it helped me learn English.

People should continue learning English because it's good for them and for their kids. If you meet somebody and they ask you your name and you don't understand, how are you going to answer them? Or if they ask you about your culture, religion or anything, how can you tell them if you do not speak English. If you want to say what is on your mind, you have to learn how to say it.

I also try to help my daughter with her homework. She is very smart and she does her homework by herself. Sometimes I ask her, "Can I see your homework so I can learn?" She says, "Mama, you don't know." "No," I tell her, "I want to see so I can learn." Sometimes she asks me questions when she doesn't know the answer and when I give her the answer, it's the right one. She is like "Oh Mama, you know." She gives me a hug and says "Mommy knows everything."

A) New phrases

Directions: fill in the blanks using the new phrases

used to	turn on
close to	by myself
for about	every day
same day	somebody
anything	everything

1. You need to _____ the lights when the room is dark.
2. Maria _____ dance but she can't because she broke her back.
3. Maria and her friends were at the mall _____ two hours.
4. People brush their teeth _____.
5. My brother doesn't speak English. He asked if _____ could help him.
6. Juan has to decide what party to go with his sister because the baby shower and surprise birthday party are on the _____.
7. I am visiting my brothers in Texas. They do not let me go outside _____ because it is not safe
8. I live _____ my cousin's house. She can walk to my house.
9. Anthony goes to Italy in the summer. Betty asks him to buy her _____ small for her desk.
10. Peter was walking by a yard sale and decided to take a look. The seller said "Take _____!! I don't want them."

B) Comprehension (group work)

Directions: Teacher assigns the paragraph and students rewrite the paragraph in their own words.

1. _____

2 and 3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

C) Opinion (group work, then class discussion)

Directions: write your opinions

1. If you could teach someone something, what would you like to teach? Why?

2. Why is \$400 too much money to spend on learning English? Would you pay \$400 to learn English? What would you buy for \$400?

3. What are some other ways adults help their children? Give examples and why do we help them.

D) Happy place (groups of 3 then class discussion)

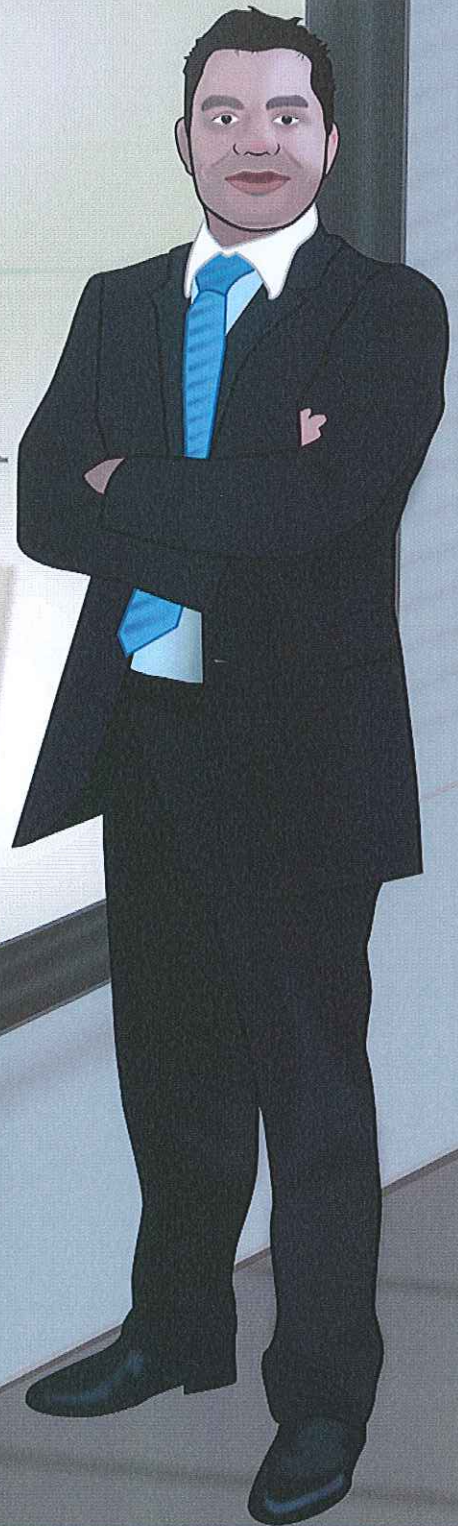
Directions: write on a separate piece of paper

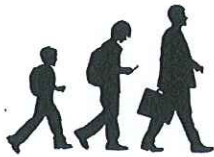
A: You are in your favorite place to sit in your home or outside. Why is this place special? What do you like about it? What do you do here?

B: Listen to **A** and write all the information and facts.

C: Pay attention to the reaction of **A** when they talk about their favorite place and write the information.

PERLERA
REAL ESTATE





MY JOURNEY FOR A BETTER LIFE

(By Saul Perlera)

Hola amigos y amigas!! I am from El Salvador. In 1986, I came to East Boston¹ when I was 16 years old because there was a war going on in my country. My family was poor and I did not see a good future there. I left my family with the promise that I was going to work hard, help them and bring them here. When I said good bye to my mother, we were both sad and we cried but I wanted to come.

Once I arrived here, I fell in love with East Boston. I told myself that I² would never go back home. I loved the freedom I felt here. I took advantage of the many opportunities in different adventures, explored different places while at the same time knowing that I would work hard for me and my family, and after 13 years, I was able to bring my mother and younger brother. My motivation to come to the United States was to give my family a better future.

It was not easy! I had no high school education, didn't speak English and knew nothing about this country or its culture. I only made it to the 5th grade in my country. Once here, I remember that in September of 1986, I went to the³ Most Holy Redeemer Church to take English classes. Most of the students were from Mexico and because of my enthusiasm to learn, I picked up English very quick. I watched TV in English like cartoons and TV shows which helped me a lot. I also remember that in those days, people looked at me with a strange look. By this time, I was learning and assimilating little by little to the new way of life and how people lived in East Boston.

With my little English, I picked up some Italian by working at the Cover⁴ Craft factory on Condor Street. During that time, 80% of the employees were Italians. I also worked at another factory making coats for the Army and it was a better paying job. There were a few factories in East Boston within walking distance such as: cars, coats, fish, curtains, bras and iron. Eventually, I got a part-time job in cleaning in Needham. During the day, I would work in the factory then go to my part-time job and on the weekends I'd clean up a salon and garage. Finally, I learned how to drive and got a little car. I did these jobs from when I was 16 until I was 22 years old.

In 1992, I went back to El Salvador for the first time. But once I came back ⁵ to East Boston, I realized it was my time! I went back to school and finished 3 levels of English at East Boston Adult Education Center. Then, I finished my GED and went to Bunker Hill Community College to concentrate in my degree. At Bunker Hill, I took business, business law and some accounting classes. I also took reading and writing classes. I took so many English classes because it is a very difficult language to learn.

While I was looking for an apartment, I met Tony. He gave me a job at his ⁶ office by helping him organize paperwork, answer the phone and make copies. I was making less money, but also thought this was what I liked and wanted to do. In 1994, when I was in college and still working for Tony, I decided to get my Real Estate license. In 2004, I started to sell houses and my first buyer was a coworker of mine from UNICCO. In the 80's, I worked with UNICCO in Copley and I became a supervisor. I bought my first house in East Boston in 1996 for \$77,000. By that time, I had already helped many people buy their first homes. The market became very busy and I never finished my degree.

One thing that has changed over the years is that back then Latinos were a ⁷ tight community; like family. There weren't many of us so we knew each other then. We protected each other. It was like an underground system to help each other bring family over from El Salvador by borrowing money. We were more united, more helpful because we were all in the same situation, less envious, and less selfish. We had sympathy for each other but you don't see that now.

If you want to live here and succeed, you have to learn English! The business ⁸ world moves in English. When you learn English, you can have better jobs, overcome obstacles, and adapt to the environment. You have to try to adapt so you can succeed in life. It took me 13 years to bring my family to United States, but I accomplished it!

A) Main Idea

Directions: read the following main ideas and choose the correct paragraph

1. I didn't finish school in El Salvador but I was able to learn English fast because I was young. I wanted to know English because I was getting used to East Boston. Paragraph # _____
2. It is important to learn English because it makes daily life easier. Paragraph # _____
3. After working hard for a few years, it was time to focus on my future. Paragraph # _____
4. I left El Salvador and moved to East Boston for a better life. It was a hard decision but I wanted to help my family. Paragraph # _____
5. We helped each other because we were a small Latino community. We understood the difficulties. Paragraph # _____
6. While working a few jobs, I was able to learn Italian and buy my car. Paragraph # _____
7. I love East Boston because I felt free. I was doing new things but also working hard to bring my family to East Boston. Paragraph # _____
8. I started working for Tony and realized I like Real Estate. People were buying houses and I also bought my first house. Paragraph # _____

B) Verbs

Directions: choose 2 verbs from each box and write a sentence (pay attention to tense of verb)

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
left help bring cried	told took come give	knew went remember learning	met decided started bought	changed protected borrowing try

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

C) Using the picture

Directions: describe the picture using the following phrases

There is/are	I see a/an
--------------	------------

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

D) Dictation

Directions: write words or phrases the teachers dictates from the story

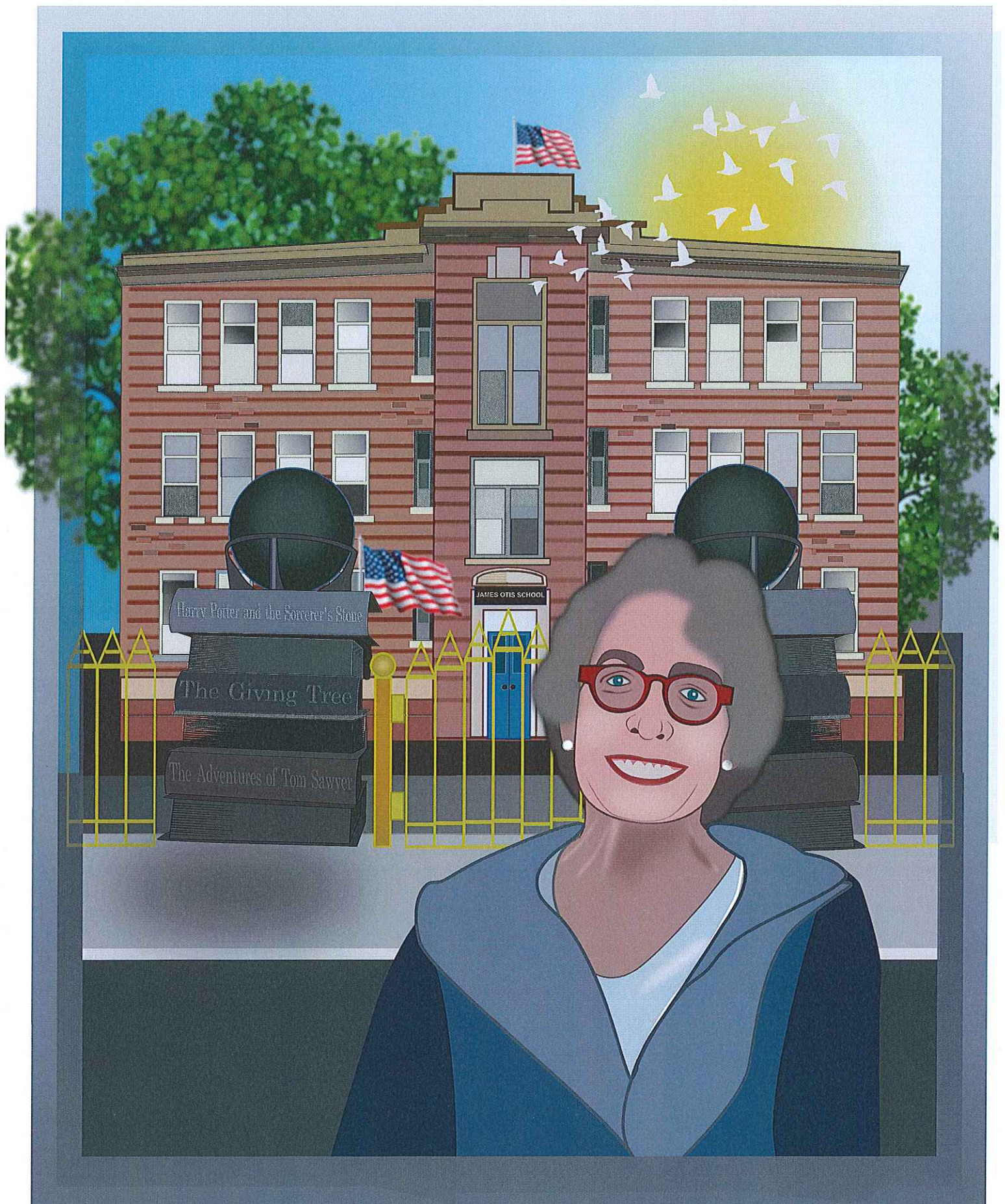
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____





MY LOVE FOR TEACHING

(By Susan Klaw)

I know about El Salvador because I am part of a Sister City Community in Watertown. It is connected to Nueva Esperanza, Chalatenango. We started the relationship during the war in El Salvador. I go to this village almost every year to help decide what projects our group can help. Now, we fund scholarships to help young people in the community to enter a university. In the 90's and 2000's, many of my ESL students were from El Salvador and they were the largest group of Latinos in East Boston.

I have been an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for adults in East Boston since 1991. I started the program called The Family School at the Otis in 2000. Parents from the Otis and other elementary schools could study English for free. In this program, parents learn English and at the same time, learn how to help their children succeed in school. They learn how to talk to their children's teacher, help them with homework, how to read to them at home, how to navigate in the community to help their families, and how to choose schools when their children leave elementary school.

These things are important because immigrant parents come from different countries and backgrounds. Each country's school wants different things from parents. In this country, the schools think of the parents of being part of a team which includes the teacher and child. The schools want parents to help them at home, to come to the school, to come to their children classroom and participate in school activities. I like teaching parents because there are so many things that they don't know. When parents learn in class, it helps their children be successful in school.

In the classroom, the parents learn how to use jigsaw puzzles, board games, what books to read with their children and how to play dress up and pretend. When you read to children, you help them develop their vocabulary, learn about the world, their home, neighborhood, school, animals from all over the world, and things that happened in history. It doesn't matter what language the parents read to their children. They will learn the vocabulary as soon as they start speaking English. It is not hard for children to go from one language to another.

Before taking the English classes, my students were shy and couldn't talk to the secretary or the teachers. After the classes, they gained a lot more confidence. They learned enough English that they can ask for their children's teacher. Also, at the teacher conference, they could understand what the teacher was saying. They also learn that the library is a great resource where they can get books, DVDs, use the computers, receive classes, and do activities. Some immigrant parents have never been inside a library and do not know what a library is. After the class, they know it's a safe and welcoming place where they can go with their children.

As an English teacher for immigrant families, I feel that I have learned as much as my students as they have learned from me. Immigration is what made this country interesting, wonderful, multicultural and multilingual. My students tell me what is hard about moving into a new country and what is wonderful about living in East Boston. I feel very privileged to learn their story because it is an American story.

A) New vocabulary/phrases

Directions: write sentences using the following phrases

1. almost every year:

2. fund scholarships:

3. since 1991:

4. succeed:

5. navigate in the community:

6. being part of a team:

7. jigsaw puzzles/board games:

8. *dress up and pretend:

9. gained a lot more confidence:

10. teacher conference:

B) Comprehension

Directions: choose the right answer for each question

1. Watertown is a Sister City Community with what village?
 - a. Chalatenango
 - b. Watertown
 - c. Nueva Esperanza
2. How often does she go to the village?
 - a. Almost every month
 - b. Almost every year
 - c. Every year
3. What is the name of the program she started?
 - a. Parents from the Otis
 - b. English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - c. Family School at the Otis
4. Name 2 things the parents learn in the class (read paragraph 2)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
5. Why are these things important for the parents to learn?
 - a. because they are a team
 - b. because parents come from different countries and have different backgrounds
 - c. because they need to learn how to read
6. How many people is "part of the team"?
 - a. Two: teacher and child
 - b. Three: parent, teacher, child
 - c. Two: parent and child

7. What does "dress up and pretend" mean?

- a. To put clothes on and think you are a princess
- b. To put clothes in the morning
- c. To put clothes on and go to a party

8. Name 2 reason why parents should read to their children (read paragraph 4)

- a. _____
- b. _____

9. What do the parents gain after taking the classes?

- a. Shy
- b. Vocabulary
- c. Confidence

10. In Susan's opinion, what made this country interesting?

- a. English teachers
- b. Students
- c. Immigration

C) Dress up and pretend (class activity)

Directions: students think of somebody they want to be and they make their costumes using flipchart paper (have a costume example)

Fireman	Policeman
Princess	Doctor
Basketball player	Carpenter
Fairy	Magician

D) Opinion (individual, then class discussion)

Directions: write your ideas

What do you love doing and why?

E) Dictation

Directions: write the sentences the teacher dictates from the story

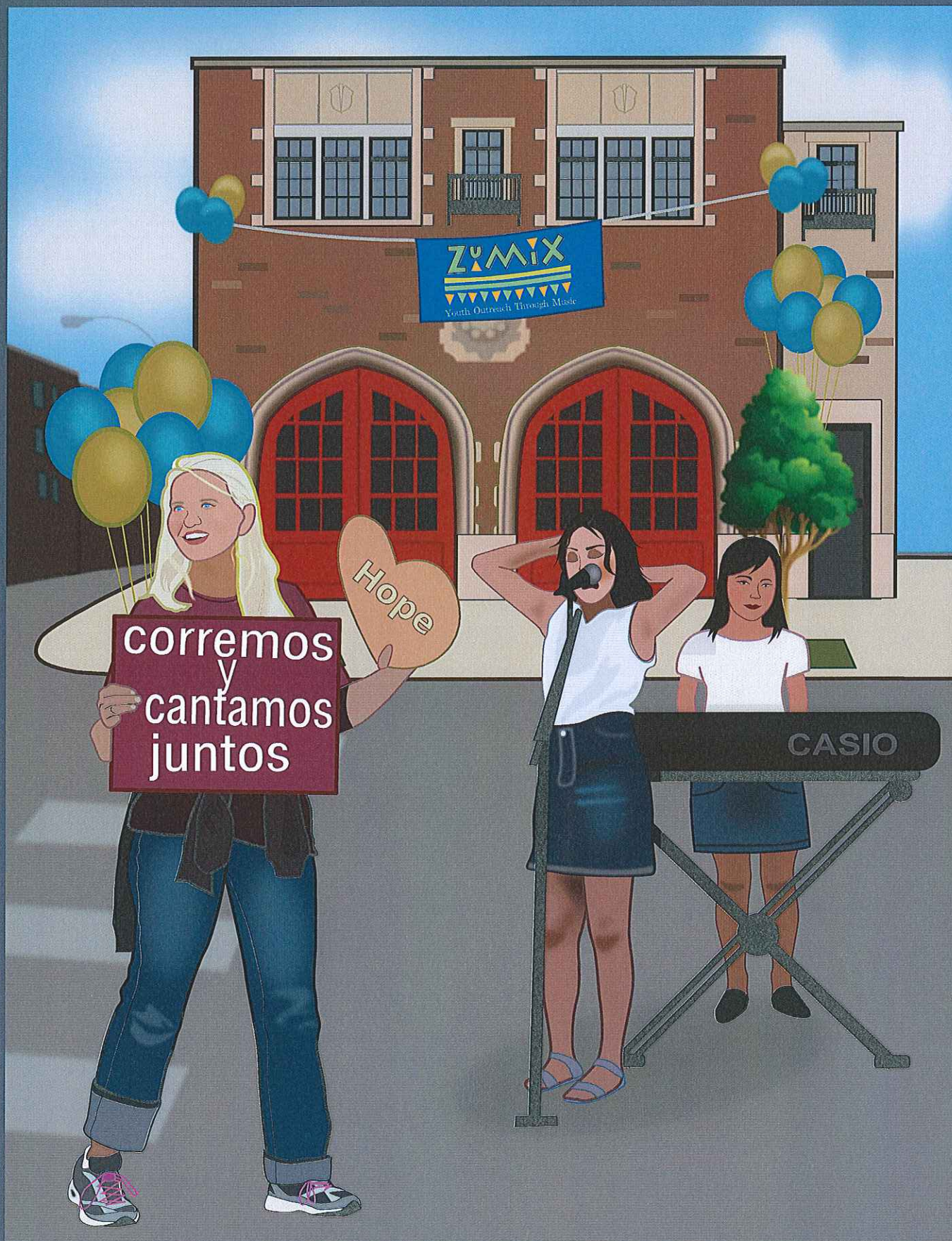
1.

2.

3.

4.

5.





FINDING YOUR PASSION IN LIFE

(By Madeleine Steczynski)

1

Can a music program be an answer to solve or to ease "gang violence"?

2

Hi, I'm Madeleine Steczynski, Co-Founder and Executive Director of ZUMIX. In 1991, there was an increase of gang violence in East Boston. The city asked the community if anyone had a creative idea on what would keep kids safe for the summer. I had an answer and I said: "I have the idea of getting kids involved in music and would like to know if that is something the city would support?" This is how Music Mobil started in the summer of 1991 in East Boston.

3

We had a few obstacles that we needed to overcome at the start of Music Mobil such as space. The major obstacle was moving our music equipment back and forth from our home and the Umana Barnes School. We always invited the youth to eat after they helped us set the equipment back up in our home. Luckily, we were able to move our equipment to a new permanent space in the corner of Maverick and Frankfort Streets because we wanted to improve our music programming. We also decided on changing our name because someone in New York was using it. We wanted a creative name and also be able to give it meaning. This is when Edwin Gonzalez came up with ZUMIX. He said it sounds like music and it represents different ethnic backgrounds and realities coming together to share their life experiences through music and envision a better future. This is how ZUMIX was born.

4

It is important for a child to go to a place where they feel safe and is healthy; like a creative place where they can enjoy themselves and learn. When a child comes to ZUMIX and does one thing and then starts doing another, he/she starts to realize that he/she is gaining skills and learning about music. The child starts to learn music instruments, sound equipment, singing, friendship, and actually enjoy doing it. I believe society should be educating our kids to learn these skills with an attitude that they will use them later in their lives.

We can't prevent our kids from becoming adults and being an adult comes⁵ with a lot of responsibility. The more we can prepare those kids for a rewarding adulthood the more their childhood will be well spent. Sometimes parents want their kids to have exposure and access to music but also some kids are passionate and want to do it themselves. Their own determination and initiative get them in our doors and this is when our work becomes magical.

Now 25 years later and in our *OWN* building, we feel that we are raising⁶ some of the kids. Some kids come here and we are their family. We guide them through adolescence and help them figure out what they want to do with their lives. We help them envision a brighter future for themselves. For those kids, ZUMIX, is worth gold. One day, we found out one of the kids was turning 16 and we surprised him with a little cupcake. All of a sudden, he put his head down in his hands. When he raised his head, he was crying and he said he had never had a birthday party before. It was an emotional time for him. You never know what kind of role you are playing in a child's life and how important it is to have a community and feel loved.

The real immigrant story that I see playing out over and over again is a story⁷ of strength, perseverance, humility and generosity. I see this amazing beautiful unfolding of the human spirit in the people that I get to work with. I have been blessed by being able to work as hard as I've worked for 25 years because the people that I've got to work with, engaged with and served have enriched my life. My life time experience has been very rich and meaningful in so many levels.

A) New vocabulary/phrases (class discussion)

Directions: talk about the meaning of the new vocabulary /phrases

• to ease	• found out
• involved	• feel loved
• set equipment back up	• all of a sudden
• being an adult	• raised
• rewarding adulthood	• worth gold
• what kind of role you are playing	

B) After school activities (class discussion)

Directions: write your ideas

1. What's the difference between extra activity and a school activity?

2. Does anyone in your family have their children in an extra activity? Why?

3. Would you put your child in a music program? Why or why not?

C) Social impact (group work)

Directions: write your ideas

1. As a parent, what do you think about gang violence? Do you see it here? Was it in your country?

2. What are some community activities or ideas YOU have to stop a kid from being involved in a gang? (Explain your ideas)

3. What are some reasons a child would join a gang?

D) Supporting ideas

Directions: choose the right answer for each question

1. Madeleine's idea to ease gang violence was to:
 - a. have kids do creative things with their hands.
 - b. have kids do creative things with music.
 - c. have kids do creative things with their family.
2. We changed the name from Music Mobil to ZUMIX because:
 - a. somebody else was using it.
 - b. we got bored with it.
 - c. we didn't like it anymore.
3. Our job becomes magical when the:
 - a. school registers the students into ZUMIX.
 - b. parents make their children learn an instrument.
 - c. students register themselves because they are interested in learning.
4. ZUMIX feels like they raise their students because:
 - a. ZUMIX helps them with life decisions.
 - b. ZUMIX needs to throw them birthday parties.
 - c. students think ZUMIX is worth gold.
5. ZUMIX is a place where children can learn:
 - a. how to do different skill in music and feel safe.
 - b. how to make friends.
 - c. how to grow as an adult.

E) Extra activity

Directions: **First**, draw an instrument or dance you would like to learn. **Then**, explain why you want to learn this instrument or dance. **Finally**, share a movie, artist, song, moment or memory of where you saw this instrument or dance.



CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you are interested in contacting any person or organization from the stories, you can find more information in the following list:

Monkeys on Marginal Street - Chris Marchi, look for him on Facebook

Meridan Market - www.meridianfoodmarket.com

Legacy Band - Jim Navarrete, look for them on Facebook

Berta and Zoila - No personal information, but if you see them on East Boston streets, they'll be happy to talk to you.

Manny Lopes - www.ebnhc.org

VROCC - www.veronicarobles.com

Farah - No personal information, but if you see her on East Boston streets, She'll be happy to talk to you.

Saul Perleta - www.perlera.com

Susan Klaw - Susan Klaw, look for her on Facebook

ZUMIX - www.zumix.org