

Years With More Knowledge

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and wish everyone much success with his/her students. In the fall, the coordinators and I had the opportunity to meet with a number of new students. It is interesting to hear their stories and why they want to learn more about reading and writing.

Some students (whose jobs have been moved overseas) are returning to education after being away from it for almost thirty years. Those students want to read in order to learn new skills and find better jobs. There are students who simply want to read their own bills and take charge of letters and other correspondence. A retiree wants to explore a world of books that he has never visited before. One student dreams of reading psalms in the Holy Bible. It is important to discuss the goals each of your student has and to help them on that journey. I enclose a recent essay and several poems by one of our students which I have found very inspiring. May all of you find a rich reward in your work as a literacy volunteer.

Years With More Knowledge:

Yes, education is important! You hear this phrase over and over all of your childhood. It does not mean much to you until you are over twenty years old and you are looking for a job and need to take care of yourself and your family.

For me, coming to the United States with a good education was definitely a plus but without speaking English, not easy at the same time. If you do not speak the language well, people think you are not smart. It was bothering me very much and pushing me to study more and more. With the ability to read, write, and understand the television, some doors were opening up to me. It was amazing!

Learning the new culture and history makes me rich and happy to know that one day when I become a mother, I'll be able to teach the little one something about this country. Also, the years with more knowledge help to make for better job opportunities.

Carrying longer conversations makes me feel good and I can tell people about my country, family, and culture in Europe. Also, I can understand peoples' lives here; hear their stories, gossip, and tragedies.

Now, in this moment, I'm not just writing in English, I can also create poems called haiku. With the help of my teacher, I find this gift I have and I can share it with him.

I love to read and understand. I love to talk on the phone and not be nervous, I can write letters, pay bills, go to the offices and stores. There is a saying in my country, "It is true that the more languages you know, the richer person you are."

end of summer
back home
sand everywhere

vacation photo
feeding birds
from my hand

crust of snow
something hiding
underneath

everyday
never the same
summer flowers

last walk barefoot
in the sand
summer vacation

fall ocean
cold feet
between the waves

finding a way
to the ground...
colorful leaves

Christmas Day...
shadow of the branch
in the snow

*essay and poems by Ivon