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Our mission is to assist people of all cultures and strengthen our community by teaching English language and literacy skills. Why not join as a member or sign up to become a tutor today?

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Unifying Our Community with English for All

Newsletter
Winter 2016

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Love Finds A Way

Volunteer tutors at Lincoln Literacy often get to listen to the most astonishing stories firsthand. Often, they hear harrowing tales.

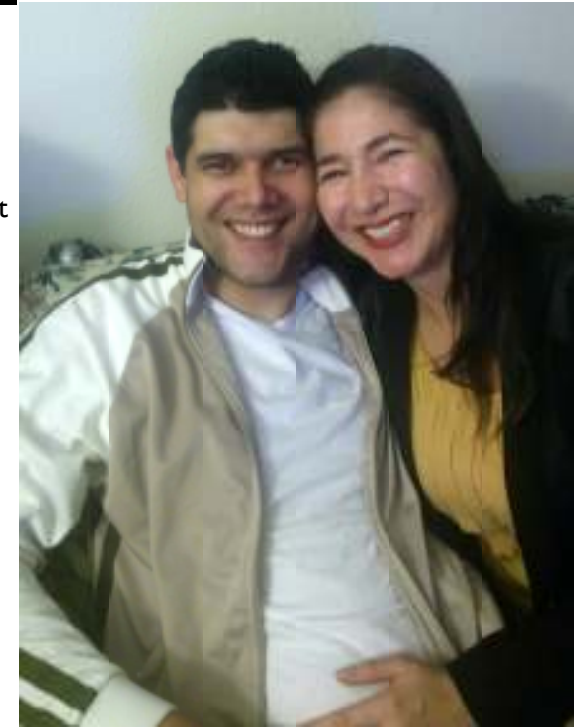
Few people ever aspire to be a refugee, driven from their home by war, oppression, predatory violence, or genocidal conflict.

Immigrants, too, often face terrible ordeals in their quest for a better life. Despite the variety of stories from Lincoln Literacy students, they share a common theme:

pursuit of the American Dream.

That's a pretty sweet motif, but once in awhile, something even sweeter comes along with it. Here's our own love story. It's the tale of Osvaldo from Cuba and Jasmith from Colombia, and their search for a place where they could have the freedom to live together as husband and wife.

"I was a political



See *Love Story*, p. 3 Osvaldo Cartaya Orgeta and Jasmith Moreno

After Hard Lessons, a Grandmother Relishes Chance to Keep on Learning



Cuc Phung, at right, with some Lincoln Literacy classmates.

Cuc Phung is nobody's idea of a typical student. At 74, though, she remains an eager learner and supporter of Lincoln Literacy. Staff and other students have grown accustomed to seeing her broad smile. If she seems at ease now, it's only because the life she led prior to resettling in Lincoln from Vietnam in 2007 was hard, unpredictable, and often disappointing.

Recently, Cuc wrote down her story. With a little editing, here it is:

"I was born into a poor family. My parents did not live together as my father was always off with another woman. I didn't get the care of a parent. I could not go to school like the other kids. When I was eight years old a kind neighbor woman helped me to get to school. She gave me money to pay the tuition fees.

See *A Grandmother's Tale*, p. 3

Manufacturer TMCO Hosts Workforce English Classes

Since its founding in 1974, Lincoln-based TMCO has gone from being a tiny local supplier of agricultural implements to a global manufacturing company that provides specialty metal products to the world. Along the way it has come to employ people from all over the world — especially refugees.

But TMCO does far more than just offer jobs. It cultivates its workforce by, among other things, bringing Lincoln Literacy onsite to provide weekly English classes for those who need them.

Founder Roland Temme, whose wife Hiroko studied English with a Lincoln Literacy tutor, has long seen the value of looking past cultural difference to find the common thread of commitment.

Lincoln Literacy program coordinator Carrie Knapp explains, "Roland's business started in a shack by the track. He had no running water. But he had an idea: If you treat people well, they'll help you build a great company.

"Over the years, he's given a chance to many people that others might not

consider. He always looks past the cultural differences and language barrier to find a commitment to achieve.

"That's a Nebraska ideal in action: We respect people who work hard."

Knapp and volunteer tutor Annette Kurth, among others, go to TMCO headquarters each Friday morning. Beginning English learners attend from 9—10, and then more advanced learners have a lesson from 10—11.

Knapp brings a lesson plan and materials each time, but the tutors talk with the students to find out what they need to learn and personalize the instruction. One student had English lessons that helped him learn to drive.

Six of the refugee learners come from Burma. Another, Taty Nlandu of Congo, was our Learner of the Year.

TMCO, whose now semi-retired founder serves on Lincoln Literacy's board, supports the classes and even gives its workers attending our classes tickets to attend Lincoln Literacy events. TMCO—one great partner!



San Pu is a refugee from Burma. Seen above at his skilled job at TMCO, he also works hard at learning English.

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If You Can Read This, You Can Surely Help!

Lincoln Literacy depends on volunteer tutors to get the job done. We offer highly effective training and support to the volunteers who teach our students. Tutors have a wide range of choices, from serving in classrooms or as one-to-one tutors. For more info, click "Get Involved" at our website, www.lincolnliteracy.org.

Former Board President, Longtime Tutor, and Benefactor David Quiring Dies

On August 29th Lincoln Literacy and learners everywhere lost a dear friend. David Quiring died at the age of 84. He was still in robust health and working hard when a tragic farming accident took his life.

David was born October 9th, 1931 in Henderson, Nebraska, where he lived most of his life. In May of 1949 he graduated from Henderson High School. Three years later he married Lavina Rieger. They remained happily married for 63 years. The couple had two sons, Galen and Randall.

After a brief stint in Colorado, David returned to Henderson where he started farming and continued to do so for the rest of his days. He became active in the Bethesda Mennonite Church and frequently traveled abroad on mission trips. He came to realize that teaching English would be a beneficial and satisfying adjunct to his missionary work.

In 1993 David made the long trek to Lincoln to go through training with Lincoln Literacy as an English language tutor. From that time on he tutored adult English language learners almost continuously.

Among his first students was Faridun Zoda, an artist who grew up in Tajikistan when it was Soviet territory. As a talented young man, Faridun won a scholarship to study at the Moscow Art Institute, and then following the collapse of the Soviet Union he was able to emigrate to the United States.

His good fortune continued when David became his tutor. Lincoln Literacy Training and Development manager Victoria Welles recalls, "David was not just his English teacher. He



In 2012 image, David Quiring stands as all applaud his service to Lincoln Literacy.

and his wife Lavina treated Faridun as a son, she said, "They had had dinner together just a few weeks prior to this terrible accident." David purchased many of Faridun's paintings. Some are on long-term loan to Lincoln Literacy. Later he commissioned Faridun to create a large, four-panel mural that adorns the north wall of our building. Called "The Lamp of Literacy," it includes a portrait of David teaching an English class

Another of his early students, Marina Kaplieva of Russia, said recently that she and her husband would never forget David, her family's first American friend and teacher. They arrived in Lincoln as refugees with young children, no English and no American credentials. In order to get to a job they had to have a car. Recognizing that, David loaned them his truck. "It was almost like a miracle," Marina said. Victoria Welles added, "This is how I will remember David, as a quiet man capable of making miracles by doing deeds of kindness."

In 1995 David joined the board of directors, serving as president from 2000 till 2005. After stepping down, he continued to serve on the board until 2008, and tutored thereafter. "As a Lincoln Literacy board member, contributor, tutor and friend, David filled every moment with a smile and a sense of true goodness," said former staffer Kevin Oliver. "He taught me that happiness comes from service to others."

David Quiring never stopped helping, and he never stop caring. He will be widely missed.

A Fund for the Future

Former Lincoln Literacy volunteer Helen Roeske remembered our organization in her will and thereby charted a new course for Lincoln Literacy. In 2015 we received \$78,049 from her estate. It was the largest single gift ever to our charitable organization. But Helen wasn't done yet. In early 2016 we received a second disbursement from her estate of \$11,565. Then former volunteer tutor Martha Countryman willed us a legacy of just over \$1,377 from her estate.

In the face of great uncertainty about federal funding, such gifts could not be more welcome. The board of directors has placed the bequests in a Fund for the Future. "The aim," explains Executive Director Clay Naff, "is to grow the fund until it can assure base annual funding for Lincoln Literacy." As the fund matures, a foundation or similar structure will be set up.

You too can make a gift that lasts forever: Leave a Legacy for Literacy!

You can designate a life insurance policy, set a portion or a percentage of your estate, or look into a charitable annuity to help LL into the future. Contact us for details.

You can also support our present-day work by making a tax-deductible donation online at: lincolnliteracy.org

◆ Love Story

Continued from Page 1

"activist from a party opposed to the government of the Castro brothers," Osvaldo recalls. "In Cuba, I worked in assembling and selling computers."

When he was 25, he seized a chance to go to Russia. "I arrived in Moscow, where I did not know anyone and did not speak the language." Once there, however, he was determined to seek refuge so that he would never have to go back to Cuba." I had a dream for all my life," he wrote in his Lincoln Literacy English class, "Freedom!"

Having escaped Cuba, however, he discovered that being accepted as a refugee is a steep challenge. On his quest, he visited 17 countries.

When he reached Colombia, he found something even more precious: love. While living and working in Bogota, the capital of Colombia, Jasmith was having lunch alone one day when Osvaldo struck up a conversation. Soon he asked her out on a date. After thinking it over for a few minutes she accepted.

"After this we fell in love," she recalls, "and we began a beautiful but difficult relationship." It was difficult not because of any troubles between the couple but because Cubans are not accepted in her country. They couldn't even get married

there. After a year of fruitless struggle for acceptance, Osvaldo set off for the US.

"In only one country is it possible to get refuge with legal status, he said, "Here I received help, thanks to God and the U.S. government."

It took nearly another year but at last he was able to send for her. Deciding to leave everything familiar and secure wasn't easy. "I talked with my family and listened to their advice, then took my suitcases and traveled to the USA — a new country, a new culture, and new weather."

Osvaldo and Jasmith married and then settled in Lincoln. They're working and studying hard, but enjoying every minute together.

"I'm 29 years old and my dream is real now," Osvaldo says with a grin. To keep the dream going, the couple knows, there's more to be done. Jasmith says. "My husband and I are studying English in Lincoln Literacy and hope that someday not far off we can speak and understand English perfectly."



◆ A Grandmother's Tale

Continued from Page 1

"A few years later I had to work to earn money to pay for school, although I was only twelve years old. I must have been a precocious student, however, and ever since then I have felt the need to study and study as hard as I could.

"In high school in Vietnam students must wear uniforms. Girls had to wear white dresses. Mine was torn at the elbow, but I didn't mind. I graduated in 1957. Some of my friends went on to university, but I had to find a job to support my mother.

"I applied to be an educator and a nurse but with no luck. Finally I passed the civil service exam and got an office job in a provincial court.

"My life changed. My father came back home, and for a time my mother didn't have to work. I got married and had six children.

"Then our luck changed again. My father became sick and died. The Communists invaded South Vietnam. Saigon fell in 1975 — and from there I fell into a trap.

"Once again I lost my all. I had only two empty hands and six children to raise. Also, my mother again needed my support, as her new husband was jailed by the communists, because he was a policeman.

"I must have gained a lot of knowledge in school, because

somehow I overcame very difficult circumstances. All my children made it to the United States, and then I followed to live with them. I like Lincoln very much. It's so peaceful. And I like Lincoln Literacy classes because the teachers are so good and kind. They teach us with all their heart. Still, when I think back to the days when we suffered famine, I shudder in fear."

Cuc Phung, seen below in white next to her tutor and classmates, attends Lincoln Literacy classes three times a week.

