Discovering
the world through
Reading!

The 2013 Collection of Stories
Written by Adult New Writers of BoulderReads!

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This edition of Discoveries is dedicated to former director, Diana Sherry. Diana started with the first group of adult literacy volunteers, responding to a need expressed by Boulder Public Library patrons. It was not long before she was hired to direct the adult literacy program, at that time called the Learning to Read program. It is due to Diana’s vision that BoulderReads! has been the successful program it is. Diana retired in November, 2012. Thank you Diana!
Last year, 220 volunteers donated more than 8000 hours to the program while serving as literacy tutors, Reading Buddies, GED class volunteers, Read to the Dog volunteers, office assistants, and special project volunteers. Together they provided weekly, ongoing, life-changing assistance to 278 adults and children: 95 adults in the library program and Family Literacy Program, 71 adults at the Boulder County Jail, 64 children in Reading Buddies, 38 adults in GED classes, and 10 children who read to one of our therapy dogs.

BoulderReads! is committed to helping people discover the power and joy of reading. Special thanks go out to the Boulder Library Foundation for supporting this mission by funding the printing of Discoveries. We also thank Greg Ravenwood and Louise Righter for doing the graphics and layout, and Loretta Goodenbour for proofing the final copy. We also sincerely honor and thank our adult authors and their tutors who supported them through encouragement and writing instruction.

We also congratulate the dedicated staff of BoulderReads!, which provides training, tools, support, encouragement, and supervision to the volunteers and learners: Former BoulderReads! Director, Diana Sherry, current BoulderReads! Manager, Shelley Sullivan, Tutor/Student Coordinators Eleanor Kalejs and Carolyn Marino, BoulderReads! Specialist and Jail Liaison, Laurie Watkins and Reading Buddies Coordinators, Carrie Hausfather, Sara Bowdey, and Mary Hale. Although on-site GED teachers, Celeste Perey-Archer and Holly Stroud are not officially staff members of BoulderReads! (they are employees of BoulderReads! partner, the Boulder Valley Family Literacy Program) we also consider them members of our team.

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Ever since BoulderReads! began in 1986, the Boulder Library Foundation has sponsored program efforts that could not have happened otherwise. For that we want to give a very appreciative thank-you!!

- The Boulder Library Foundation funded our very first staff computer, back in 1986.

- The Boulder Library Foundation has covered the printing costs for every edition of Discoveries that we have published, including this one.

- The Boulder Library Foundation has covered the costs of nearly every Reading Buddy session held here at the Main Library each semester.

- The Boulder Library Foundation has funded nearly every one of our annual Reading Progress Celebrations.

- And, from time to time, the Foundation has helped with other special projects, such as the curriculum kits we developed in 1992 (and subsequently sold to 63 other adult education programs in Colorado), our 25th-anniversary video, and furniture for our computer lab.

From all of the staff, all of the students, and all of the volunteers of BoulderReads! a resounding Thank-You to the Boulder Library Foundation!
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When I found out I was pregnant with my first child, I was scared and happy at the same time. I did not know what to do or what to expect! I told my family and friends that I was going to have a beautiful baby and they were happy for me. My mom was so glad to have a first grandchild that she cried tears of joy. Going to the doctor for the first time was also exciting! I found out I was three months pregnant and I got to hear the heartbeat. Then I knew everything was going to be fine.

Watching my baby grow month by month and seeing my body change was thrilling! It was amazing to know that I was making new life. Through the months I thought about all the challenges I was going to face. Since this was my first baby, I did not know what to look forward to, but I had family and friends to help me out.

When it was time for my baby to arrive, it was the most exciting experience of my life! I was ready to take her home and care for her. I knew that I had a lot to do like feeding her, bathing her, and teaching her new things, but I did not know how to do it or when to do it. Throughout the years it was a challenge for me, but it got easier. It was a lot of fun to show her how to crawl and walk and do all the other playful things children do.

Four and a half years later, I had another baby! All of the same feelings of having a child came back. I was very happy that I was going to have two beautiful girls in my world. I love being with them and seeing them every day. They mean everything to me!

Having my girls in school makes it a challenge for me to help them with their schoolwork. My oldest told me she did not want to read because she knew that I could not read. I explained to her that reading is the number one thing in life. I do not want her to be 30 years old and not know how to read. Then I realized that I needed to do something to fix it. I enrolled in BoulderReads! so I could show her that I am trying to improve to help both of my kids through school. It is one of the best decisions I could ever make for my children. Having them see that I go to class twice a week and reading to them at home is showing them they can do it. I am so proud of myself and especially proud of my girls to see them work so hard, because now I know that they do not have to struggle in school like I did.

Jamie Lujan grew up in Longmont, Colorado and lives there now with her two daughters and fiancé. She has been in BoulderReads! for two years and has improved her reading, writing, and math skills. As a result, she earned a promotion and raise at work. Jamie has also noticed progress and increased independence in everyday activities such as reading menus, following directions and filling out forms. She is really excited to be able to support her children with their school work and has found that, since reading is now enjoyable, she is reads to them more often in her spare time. Jamie is a more confident mother, employee and person today.

Jamie’s tutor, Katie Carr, grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee. She has lived in Boulder for two years and has been a tutor for BoulderReads! for the past year. She really likes working with Jamie because she is open-minded and very motivated!
Good evening, everyone. It is a privilege to receive this award in Janet’s honor. Thank you, Deputy Mayor Morzel and members of the city council.

I truly understand Janet’s story on a very personal level, as I had to overcome similar circumstances in the beginning of my experience as a United States resident.

Six years ago, the meaning of written and oral communication was redefined for me when the symbols and sounds that I had become used to over most of my life appeared to be new and strange. As time went by, I discovered the challenges of living in a different culture with new people, behaviors, and traditions, where every mundane activity seems to be a scary and unknown adventure pulled from a science fiction novel, to be quite overwhelming.

I never truly understood the importance of having a voice and being able to understand the world around me until I came to Colorado and was no longer able to express my emotions, needs, and ideas. That ability was something I had always had and I had taken for granted. When you are not able to communicate properly, the simplest task, like applying for a job, getting a driver’s license, reading a drug prescription, buying groceries, reading recipes, or even reading the newspaper, can prove to be a challenge.

When I found myself in a new situation, I always tried to remain calm and to let people know what I needed to say, but it is not always as easy as it sounds. For instance, on many occasions I had people laugh at me because of my pronunciation or because I was taking too long while trying to express an idea. To be honest, I felt very frustrated and sad to be so impotent. I knew I needed to recover my voice and face the challenges ahead of me. However, learning, reading, and writing a new language is never easy, especially when your mind is full of other concerns, responsibilities, and obligations.

The first time I heard about BoulderReads!, it was a recommendation from a friend. I had seen the name of the program, but never realized it would be such an important part of my life as a US citizen. Today, thanks to my wonderful tutors and friends, Doris Montgomery, Carol Smoot, and Debra Kalish, I have lost count of the number of books I have read. My English is constantly improving and I feel confident
that my future in this community that I now call home is brighter than ever. I feel more productive, more integrated into my community. I work for Immigrant Legal Center of Boulder County, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to expand access to reliable legal services for the immigrant community, to educate the immigrant population about U.S. law, and to educate the general public about the legal difficulties encountered by immigrants in this country. Thank you very much.

Lilian Bucio finished two years of college in Mexico before moving to the United States. Once she arrived, she was determined to improve her English reading and writing skills in order to eventually attend college and ultimately, ensure a better future for herself and her son. Thanks to her focused work on computer skills as well as core grammar, spelling, vocabulary and reading comprehension skills, Lilian recently obtained a better job. In addition, now that she has spoken at the BoulderReads! Reading Progress Celebration and before the Boulder City Council, Lilian has increased her confidence in public speaking.

Lilian’s tutor, Debra Kalish, has worked with Lilian since September 2011. Debra, an attorney for the City of Boulder, said this about working with Lilian, “Lilian is an inspiration. Her hard work and determination to improve her life, her son’s life, and that of other immigrants in Boulder is humbling.”
One warm afternoon nine years ago I was working at the Sunday market in Chiang Mai, Thailand. I was selling homemade decorations in a booth along the wall of a Buddhist Temple. My friend Chile and I had just finished setting up.

Suddenly, Chile and I noticed a tall dark curly-haired western man walking into the Temple wearing a pink and yellow striped sarong. My friend and I couldn't help giggling at him. When he entered the temple, the monk pointed to the sarong and asked, “For lady? Are you lady boy?” The man said no.

When he came out of the Temple he came over to our booth and asked me, “Why are you laughing?” I didn't understand what he was saying, so Chile translated. He hung out for a while and we tried to communicate with each other. Before he left he asked me to go on a motorcycle ride the next day.

The next day I was so excited to take him to our beautiful zoo. He looked so disappointed. Finally I figured out he wanted to go for a ride in the countryside. We realized we had a lot of work to do on communication.

However, we enjoyed being together and knew an attraction was there. It would be worth working on learning each other’s language. Cliff and I have now been married for 8½ years and we live in Boulder, Colorado. We have two children, Anna Pir, 7½, and Micah, 3½.

Aay Bravin grew up in a small village in Northern Thailand, where her schooling was very basic. She says, “There was no electricity. Education was quite simple. Travel to the nearest town took three hours by horse and was not an option.” Aay is now pleased to have moved to Boulder, Colorado, where her husband is based. She says, “BoulderReads! has given me the opportunity to improve my reading and writing and English. I feel blessed that I have found this program. Improving my skills has given me many opportunities.” She says, “I would like to thank my tutor, Suzy Aishton. Without your help I couldn’t be here today writing this story. I always enjoy seeing you very much. You’ve become my treasured friend. Thank you so much.”

Aay has primarily focused on personal and job skills over the last seven years in BoulderReads! She has not only started her own home-based business, but has improved her workplace skills as well. She has improved life skills such as writing checks, completing forms, reading medicine labels and street signs. In addition, she has focused on writing skills like punctuation, organization, spelling and grammar. She has also strengthened her computer literacy skills. Aay has concentrated on skills that support her children’s education, such as reading to them more, helping them with their homework, and communicating with their teachers. In 2010, Aay was awarded the Janet Driscoll Turner Outstanding Adult Learner Award because of her dedication to her learning and the improvements she has made.

Aay’s tutor is Suzy Aishton. She is a retired third/fourth grade elementary teacher. She and Aay have been studying together for five years. She says, “I always look forward to spending time with Aay. Her enthusiasm and love of learning make our time together a rewarding and enjoyable experience for both of us. BoulderReads! is truly a powerful and life-changing experience for all of us who participate in this excellent program.”
I am working for a nonprofit organization that has different kinds of programs like Parenting Engagement, Child Care Providers, and Leadership. All of these programs are wonderful because they help parents to be more involved in their children's life and help their children to be successful in school. I have been working with the Child Care Providers program for several years. I provide training for child care providers on early education and also I make home visits to support the providers' learning. I really love my job, and because of that, I like to learn anything related to education in order to improve myself, to become a better trainer, and be a better mentor, each day.

One of the many things I like to do in my job is attend workshops that are related to my area of early education. Since I have been working here I have attended several workshops, and I found out that all the information I have received has helped me a lot. With every workshop I receive a manual to use on my own time or any time I need it on the job. It is very important for me because any time I need any suggestion or a review of something about early education I just need to look at the manual, and quickly I find what I am looking for because those manuals are very easy to understand with very helpful information.

Last May I attended a three-day workshop that provided me with a great deal of new strategies for working with clients. The workshop was very interactive and efficient, so I had a good impression of all the information I received, and they also gave me a manual to use at work. I was very excited with the new techniques I learned, and I really thought that as soon as I got back to work I would implement it in my home visits. Once at work, I started to read the manual and found so many unfamiliar words that I became very frustrated. Then I started to read the same paragraph again and again, and I did not get it. It was so hard for me to understand, that I thought that I needed to work harder on my English, and also I was discouraged to read it again.

I mentioned it to my tutor, Jeannie, and I asked if she could help me to understand the manual and, of course, she said yes, so I was very happy because she could help me to read and comprehend it. We started to read and suddenly she told me, “This manual is hard to read.” When she said that, I felt a little relieved knowing that my English is not too bad. My tutor, Jeannie, had worked in making manuals for different programs, and she mentioned that the manuals need to be simple and easy, so everybody can read and comprehend the concepts they want to teach. I agree with her. I really think if developers of manuals want their students to understand the material and concepts, they need to understand that in order for people to really get it, they need to write it in a simple way that everybody can understand.

We are still working on the manual twice a week and we get to work on only a few pages, but we are almost done with it. I really appreciate the patience and the support I have from my tutor, Jeannie, because without her help I was not able to understand a single page.
Mirla Coronado de Low has lived in Boulder for 12 years. She has two wonderful boys, Josef, who is 11 years old, and Erik, who is 9 years old. Her hobbies are playing with her boys, reading books, and volunteering in her children's school. She loves living in Boulder because it is a beautiful and unique place.

Mirla has been enrolled in BoulderReads! for over five years. She has been honored with the Boulder Rotary Club’s Outstanding Adult Learner Award and completed the Boulder County Leadership Fellows program sponsored by the Community Foundation. Mirla became a US citizen while enrolled in BoulderReads!, and in order to do so, she had to concentrate on improving her retention and comprehension of written materials, sight word base and vocabulary along with grammar, spelling, punctuation and organizational writing skills. She is now also able to write notes, descriptive essays, and letters. She has improved her spelling, grammar, writing, and reading in the English language. Her goal for this coming year is to return to the University of Colorado to finish her Bachelor’s Degree.

Mirla’s tutor, Jeannie Connelly, has been a Boulder resident since 2003. She spends her spare time creating art, singing, and hiking. Jeanne loves volunteering for BoulderReads! She finds her sessions with Mirla to be a learning experience as well as a teaching experience.
Introduction
I wanted to read a biography about a great woman leader in American society who inspires me. I chose Eleanor Roosevelt because she was a strong individual that I look to as a role model. She did many things for people and for the world. She gives women hope for the future.

Early Family
Eleanor’s mother often said mean things about her. Her mother died when Eleanor was young. Her father, Elliott Roosevelt, traveled as a sportsman. He treated Eleanor like a princess. Eleanor’s grandmother took in Eleanor and her brothers when her father was unable to care for them.

Eleanor had a strict, traditional upbringing. She learned how to ride a horse, studied French and art, and attended church often. She had to keep her room clean and make her bed. She had to dress for dinner and was expected to do well in school. Eleanor’s brother, Elliott, died from the flu.

Eleanor’s uncle was President Theodore Roosevelt. Theodore was a wealthy businessman and philanthropist. He founded the US National Park Service, the Metropolitan Museum, and Museum of Natural History. He also started the New York Orthopedic Hospital.

Eleanor wanted to be accepted in society because her Aunt Pussie and her cousin Alice were popular and she wanted to be popular too.

Her Relationship with Franklin
Franklin grew up with luxurious things. He loved sports and history. Eleanor and Franklin’s relationship was fun at first. Then Franklin’s mother thought that Franklin was too young for marriage. His relationship with his mother, Sara, was strange because Sara’s husband died when Franklin was in college. Sara was very involved in Franklin’s academic life.

Eleanor and Franklin married in March of 1905. Eleanor did not like her new house. It did not feel like her own home because Sara had picked it out for them. Eleanor and Franklin had six children—Anna, James, Franklin I, Elliott, Franklin II, and John. Eleanor relied on the nurse for help with the children. Franklin I died from the flu at eight months of age.

Franklin’s Political Life
In 1910, Franklin ran for and won his first political office as a Democratic state senator in New York. Louis Howe, a newspaperman, became Franklin’s top adviser and lifelong friend. After Franklin suffered from typhoid fever, Louis ran the campaign. Louis also urged Eleanor to help Franklin in his campaign. Eleanor told Franklin how to run the office and advised him.

Later, Franklin served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy under President Woodrow Wilson. He later ran for Vice President with James Cox. In 1921, he suffered from a severe case of what was believed to be polio.

During the 1932 Presidential Election, Franklin and Eleanor wanted to hear the good news about the nomination and then they traveled to the convention. Franklin was elected President of the United States for four terms. He wanted to see the war to the end.
He died on April 12, 1945. Eleanor discovered that he was with Lucy Mercer at the time of his death. Harry Truman became president when Franklin passed away. June 6, 1944 was D-Day—the liberation of Europe. The Allies defeated Germany and the war ended.

**Eleanor's Political Life**

Eleanor met Marion Dickman and Nancy Cook, members of the Women's Division of the Democratic State Committee. They had a strong influence on her because they believed in women's rights. She had forgiven Franklin and she was inspired to follow his example. After Franklin's death, Eleanor became the US Delegate of the United Nations. She was the chair of the Commission of Human Rights. She believed in human rights for all people. She was persistent and believed in world peace. She was also charming to the people as the US Delegate. She resigned from this post because of the new Republican president, Dwight Eisenhower.

Eleanor loved to travel and went to India, the Middle East, Japan, and the Soviet Union in order to see how other people lived. She was a strong influence in changing the world around her and she fought hard for world peace. One of her comments was, “We must provide leadership for free people.”

Eleanor learned by living and learned new skills such as running her own business. She volunteered for the American Association of the United Nations and many more organizations. Eleanor loved to entertain friends and powerful world leaders in her new home. Many of these people attended a party for Eleanor's 70th birthday. She received telegrams from people whom she considered dear friends. Eleanor thought John F. Kennedy was immature and inexperienced. She later found him fascinating and outgoing and considered him a good speaker.
A Writer and Teacher
Eleanor was passionate about teaching and writing. She loved to teach and tried to inspire and challenge her students and help them succeed. She was outspoken in her writing. Eleanor published three volumes of her autobiography: *This I Remember*, *On My Own*, and *You Learn by Living*. She wanted to tell about her life when she was growing up.

Her Ending
Eleanor accomplished what she set out to do—change the world. She helped write the Declaration of Human Rights. She considered this her greatest achievement.

Eleanor visited her childhood home for one last time. She reminisced with Anna, her daughter, about her childhood and growing up. She celebrated her 78th birthday before she died of tuberculosis on November 7, 1962. The greatest leaders of the world came to pay respects to Eleanor because she tried to make the world a better place.

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*Amanda Schultz* lives in north Boulder with her cat, Paisley. She has lived in Boulder for 35 years. Amanda is currently working at SRM, Survey Research Management. Amanda enrolled in BoulderReads! seven years ago because she wanted to learn how to read better and feel more confident in herself. Although she graduated from high school, she had always experienced reading difficulties, feeling that she read too slowly to keep up with other students. She felt she struggled with long term memory issues and comprehension skills. With the help of several different tutors, Amanda has improved her basic reading and writing skills, as well as learning to write thank you notes, postcards, and book summaries. She reads maps and menus more comfortably, has improved her math skills, and has spoken publically many different times. Amanda is also a recipient of the Boulder Rotary Outstanding Adult Learner Award.

*Jacalyn Colt* has been Amanda’s tutor for three and a half years, a most gratifying experience. She is a retired educator who was the Title I Director in St. Vrain Valley School District and an Adjunct Professor in Literacy at the University of Colorado.

The process they used to create this piece for Discoveries is as follows:

Process: This was a very difficult book to read and comprehend, as the information is dense with many facts, dates, and names. During each session, Amanda would read and orally summarize a chapter. For homework, she would construct a summary from our notes. Sometimes she would use the word processing program on her computer to type her summary. When she completed the book, we took all of these summaries and developed categories for them. Amanda edited seven drafts until the selection sounded the way she wanted it to sound.
My Relationship with Crochet and Weaving

by Anita Porcile

Throughout my life, I grew up relating closely to the natural world where both men and women took advantage of the resources that Mother Earth gave them and created many household objects with a very personal touch. Each person connected with his senses and gave birth to a new product. This is why I saw women around me sewing, weaving, and making their own clothes and decorating their homes by themselves and showing their unique pieces in their own social environment.

I was always attracted to the feeling of exclusivity, because in the finish of each garment you can see love, warmth, and the feeling from the creative hands. That is why I choose durable materials and natural fibers that are easy to maintain.

From my distant land south of the world—Chile—with my creations, I desire within the unity of each stitch to reach new latitudes. Each time a person receives a piece created by my hands they will have the security and satisfaction that it will be unique.

Within my work you will find a variety of household items and clothing, such as curtains, valances, bedspreads, tablecloths, placemats, table runners, pads, collars, hats, scarves, vests, blouses, dresses, and jackets.

I invite you to contact me and get an exclusive piece of high quality in the art of creating a crochet and weaving art.

Anita Porcile is from Chile. She enrolled in BoulderReads! several years ago with the goal of improving her writing and conversation skills. Anita has seen great improvement in her reading and writing skills and that has helped her overall comprehension of written materials. She has started reading for fun, obtained a job and corresponds more comfortably using email. Her ability to fill out applications, use a bank account, and read medicine labels and instruction manuals has also improved. Anita’s overall confidence in her reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills has lead her to write regularly in her journal, write this story for Discoveries, participate in conversation classes, and buy a home.

Anita’s tutor is Jacqueline Trowbridge. She has worked with Anita since April 2012. She says that working with Anita is a real pleasure as she is very motivated and excited to learn. In her spare time, Jacqueline likes to ride her bike, lift weights, read, and play with her dog.
Have you ever wondered why there are so many dropouts in the United States? Approximately seven to eight white students and five to six black and Hispanic students out of ten graduated from high school in 2008. Many reasons are contributing to the dropouts. However, one of the most notorious is the lack of enthusiasm for school. Kids are not seeing school as a place for learning. They are seeing it as a confinement, especially when they are struggling with a subject.

Back in 1895, the school year was only seven months long, and the rest was for planting, harvesting, and working in farms. With such a short school year, kids were learning subjects more deeply than they are today such as geography, mathematics, and reading comprehension. How can that be possible? First of all, at the end of the 18th century kids did not have as many distractions as today. They did not have computers, cell phones, TVs, or any other electronic devices. Now, all of these gadgets are part of the education system. Kids must learn how to use them wisely, how to control their usage, and how to make the most out of them. Also, teachers were boarded in small towns, so parents were more involved in school. They had the opportunity to see each other more frequently, therefore communicate their worries.

Time has changed, and so have school requirements. Kids do not have the luxury of going to school whenever they like. Back then, the reason was because of harvesting or helping parents or working. Now, there is no reason. Either they stay in school and acquire enough knowledge, or they could suffer consequences such as low-paying jobs and an uncertain future.

Moreover, society also needs them to stay in school. In 2005 there were 38 million people older than 65 years, but by 2050, there will be 88 million. Many of the jobs these people are doing are highly skilled. So, when they retire, highly trained people must replace them. Moreover, they will be retired and the government must pay for it. However, where is the government going to get the money from? A lot of money will come from taxes and economic growth.

One way to prepare our workforce for a better future is to keep them in school. However, they also need to be interested in school. After-school programs offer lots of variety such as music, arts, fitness, homework help, and more, which engages kids to stay interested in school.

There are people that nullify after-school program benefits. They say that kids do not learn properly if they stay in school for too long. Part of the argument does make sense. “Kids do not learn properly,” if they do the same thing over and over. They must have fun, must explore, and must feel safe while learning. Overall, they must get out of the routine in order to learn and that is what happens in an after-school program.

Kids have a plethora of choices. Subjects such as foreign languages, music, science, dance, etc., are important in today’s competitive world. One example is being bilingual. The opportunities are greater for them, not just because they have access to a wider number of people, but because their cognitive skills also improve. Another example is when they practice music or dance. They do not just practice with their bodies. Their minds are exposed to an art that can change their lives forever. Moreover, they can become engaged with harder subjects such as science, therefore they develop more knowledge.

But not everybody agrees with this. Their arguments are that kids are already learning all this at school. They say that kids have enough time for music and physical education twice per week and that science is already taught at an early age. In fact, many of the subjects are taught throughout the day. The difference is that...
after-school programs are more focused on the necessities or the qualities the student has. For example, if a child is struggling with mathematics, he/she will receive help in that specific subject. Also, if a child is excelling in science, he/she will participate in an advanced program.

But what about the time they spend at school? Is it not bad for them to be at school for too long? If a kid gets to pick a subject, he will pick one he likes. As a consequence, he will get motivated, and will study with great enthusiasm. Let’s say that Jackson, a second grader, likes to take pictures. At home he loves to use his father’s camera. He takes pictures of every corner of the house, his family, his pets, even his toys. Perhaps, if his father has the knowledge and the time, he will teach Jackson about the art of taking pictures. On the other hand, what if his father knows nothing about it? At after-school programs, Jackson will have the opportunity to learn about it in the company of his friends or with kids with similar interests. His achievements will be reflected on his report card and his life as he gains more confidence, security, and knowledge about how to work as a team.

Even if Jackson is put in a math class, which is a subject that he needs to work on, his time will be well spent. If he is sent home and is asked to work hard on his math, he may not do it. Instead, he may squander a good amount of his time playing video games, surfing the Internet, watching TV, or doing something else. In a survey conducted by the Labor Department, children 6 to 12 years old spent an average of 1.8 hours watching TV on weekdays and 2.7 hours on weekends. Besides watching programs that may not help in any way, the children’s minds are getting commercialized. Up to 38% of a single hour is pure advertising. The worst happens when a child watches a program that is not suited for him/her. Programs rated TV-14 are usually watched by 6- or 7-year-olds. Such programs are broadcast all day, every day. On the contrary, after-school programs are only an hour and a half long, three or four times per week, depending on the district and its resources.

For some people, however, TV, video games, and the Internet should be a part of the children’s lives as well. Otherwise, kids will feel out of place when interacting with other peers. This is mostly at school, when other children boast about a popular game or TV show. In my opinion, children do have the right to watch TV and play video games. I also believe that there should be a limit on these kinds of activities. Children should not spend more time watching TV than doing their homework or improving their skills.
There are also parents that do not let their kids watch TV, play video games, or allow them to be in after-school programs. They believe that playing is as important as being done with school earlier than 3 p.m. In fact, kids do learn a lot while playing. Unfortunately, times have changed. Today’s world needs a more professional workforce and more people capable of doing extraordinary things. After-school program teachers know this. That’s why their variety of classes combine playing and teaching. Moreover, their programs are improving, based on continuous research.

On the other hand, there are parents that are taking advantage of after-school programs. Many parents must work long hours in order to support their families. Thanks to such programs, parents have the opportunity to leave their kids in good hands and not in front of a TV. In addition, some parents are seldom seen at school, whether it is because they work during school or some other reason. Because kids are staying at school for an extra hour, parents have more chances to visit them. It is more usual to see parents involved in after-school programs than in a daily school schedule. As a consequence, kids feel empowered when parents visit them. They see that school is important and that their parents are supporting them.

Those who do not agree believe that such parents are using after-school programs as a day-care center. They also believe that even though parents have the opportunity to be at school they never go. It is true that some parents never visit their children at school. What’s most important is that kids are still receiving the benefits regardless of their parent’s participation. As a consequence, they will have more opportunities than their parents, a more joyful life, and more positive thoughts towards education.

After-school programs can be costly, but the remuneration can be bigger. Let’s say that Lindsey, a sixth grader, is doing well in school. She is an exemplary and committed student at school and does her homework on time. However, her parents do not believe that they should pay anything else for after-school programs. So Lindsey’s experience is limited to what she can learn at school. She will not experience new subjects nor will she improve her abilities in science, which is her favorite subject. She will be fine until she notices that school is getting boring. When she gets to high school, she will not have the same knowledge or will lack enthusiasm. She will look for other influences instead. Such influences could lead to absenteeism, drug use, or even dropping out. All this is because she did not have enough choices when she needed them.

Another misunderstanding with after-school programs is the snacks they serve. Some parents believe that it is not for after-school programs to decide what their kids should eat. They are right; that’s why they have the choice to send their kids with snacks of their choice. On the other hand, there are kids who only eat healthy snacks at school. The reasons vary, but the most common is the lack of information about nutrition. After-school programs also enhance their student’s knowledge about good nutrition.

The best part of after-school programs is the end-of-course celebrations. In such gatherings, parents have the opportunity to see art, experience performances, watch circus acts, and enjoy musicals, all performed by their kids. It is a unique opportunity to see what after-school programs can achieve with kids. Kids can be dressed as clowns, animals, Mexican dancers, street performers, and more. It’s like a party designed for kids and by kids. With such events, parents also have the opportunity to meet other parents, meet their kids’ friends, have a great time, and above all, empower their kids with their presence.
Ivan Montes finished twelfth grade in Mexico. He has been in BoulderReads! for almost five years, and enjoys working with his dedicated tutor, Kevin. He is now able to read books such as The Omnivore’s Dilemma by Michael Pollan, The Tipping Point by Malcom Gladwell, The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo series, and the Game of Thrones series. He has also read many self-improvement books in his native language of Spanish. He is an active participant in numerous programs such as “Los Padres” and the PTO at his children’s schools. His improved writing skills have allowed him to help his daughter with middle school homework and communicate with family and friends through email. He is currently improving his math skills by studying Algebra in preparation for higher education. He is also focusing on writing techniques by writing various assignments such as “Three-minute fiction stories,” persuasive papers, research reports and creative writing. Ivan has also received a raise and promotion at his job while with BoulderReads! He passed the GED exam a few years ago and feels more comfortable on the computer. In his free time, he likes to spend time with his wife Mayra and their two beautiful children, Cynthia and Ivan Jr.

Ivan’s tutor, Kevin Cripps, is a software engineer in the Boulder area who has been working with Ivan for the past four years. He has enjoyed watching Ivan’s skills in reading and writing progress, and continues to admire Ivan’s dedication and hard work towards his education despite many time-consuming obligations to his family, job, and community. When not working or tutoring, Kevin likes to spend time outside, enjoying Boulder’s bountiful outdoor recreation.
I found out about BoulderReads! through the teacher at the GED class. Then I called the person that runs the program and then she set me up with a tutor! My motivation was to get educated. I want to continue learning new things. This is a process of learning from books and also learning how to use a computer.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who are taking time out of their busy schedules to help the people who never had a chance to get educated, either because they were helping their spouses to get a degree or raising their children. Since I have been in BoulderReads!, this program has changed my life. I have more knowledge and I am more confident with myself. I enjoy challenging myself to try to use new vocabulary words and when I talk to my English-speaking friends they notice that I am speaking more comfortably.

In conclusion, I appreciate BoulderReads! very much. I want to continue to read better and faster, and eventually to write my own essays and stories.

Lucilia Valente was born in Portugal. She has been a resident of Boulder for the past 26 years and has two children. Since enrolling in BoulderReads! two years ago, she has improved her computer skills, including emailing and word processing. Now she enjoys reading and writing and is focusing on writing essays.

Lucilia had to end her educational career in ninth grade in Portugal because she needed to help her parents take care of her siblings. She has attended GED classes through Family Literacy Program, and with the support of her tutor, she now feels more confident with her reading and writing skills, and is able to read GED materials. She has learned how to use a dictionary, read a map, complete forms and read the newspaper more comfortably. Lucilia also has seen reading skills improvement in areas like comprehension, fluency, phonics, and her vocabulary base. Lucilia is reading and writing for fun now, and thanks to a second BoulderReads! computer tutor, she is using the computer for Internet searching.

Lucilia was recently matched to a new tutor, Swathi Ramesh. Swathi and her husband, Kartik, have been in Boulder for a year. She is very excited to help a person as motivated as Lucilia is to reach her goals.
I wish I lived closer to my daughter. Seeing each other once a year isn’t enough. Kids and parents need to know each other and feel that energy. And I wish her grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins were living in the same house.

When you have a child, it’s not just you anymore. Mostly in African communities, it takes many people to help raise a kid. In the USA, it seems more often it’s just parents and kids. When parents and kids live apart, it’s important to keep the relationship going from afar. Dads and moms provide different things to the child. Also, communication is important—to know the kid.

Educating kids is not just about going to school. Guidance is important. For example, keeping the house: parents need to ask a child to pick up a book or anything else they drop. You don’t see this in the USA that much. This can spoil their minds. It’s okay for humans to make mistakes, but you must correct them. If a child knows only a mess, that’s what she will repeat. But if a parent cleans, then a child will learn to take care of a place.

I learned a lot from my parents. My dad told me, "All fingers are not equal," meaning if everyone were the same, it would be already known, and people have different abilities. Also, I learned manners from my parents, and how to respect others, through self-respect first.

Once you are a parent, you need to step aside from some things, to make this other human the priority. Kids make parents learn a lot. It’s give and take. Both give. My parents gave the tools for me to be a good parent. They had nine kids, so anyone’s problems were held by the whole family. Kids felt responsible to help the family, by working. I really appreciate all the tools they have given me.

It can take lots of sacrifices to become an adult. You can be self-supportive and have the confidence that you can ask others for advice and help. If parents provide children with a good start in life, then their children will grow up as good adults, able to make better choices.

I saw my mom working so hard, I felt bad for her, that it’s too much. She didn’t want to see her kids going hungry. I saw her pain. Around age 10, I felt had to do something. The first way I helped was in the kitchen. Mom said, "Don’t think that because you’re a male you can’t be in the kitchen. You should know how to feed yourself because you might have to one day." I learned so much from her.

The first food I made didn’t turn out well. It was banku, fermented corn, with a special stick to stir, and a half hour of cooking. The first time, I didn’t have patience, and she saw, and let me make a mistake. I had to dump it and redo it. The second time it turned out well. These lessons apply to my daily life; everything I do—my drumming, the way I talk to people. If I offend someone, and they say how, then I learn and adapt. Africans may laugh at you when you make a mistake, but they will also tap your shoulder and help you learn how to do it.

When speaking English, sometimes people have laughed at me and only walked away, without correcting me. That’s not communicating. If they would correct me, I would know my mistakes, learn from them, and not make the same mistake.
When my brother Maputo and I were in Ghana this summer, a friend asked, “Why are Africans always loud, it seems like you’re fighting?” In the USA, people don’t express straight; they zip it, repress, then go get guns, and kill innocent people. But in Africa, you get it out, even if it’s loud. Some fighting might happen, but the next day they are eating out of the same bowl. Do Westerners eat from same bowl, share the same energy? No. If we do that more, I think the world will have less war. It’s simple, and small, but helps. There’s not so much buildup of bad feelings.

Therapists in the West are like the social fabric in most of Africa, where family and friends come to you to help. Here, whatever pain you’re facing, it’s only you to face that. Money comes first here; it’s more important than other connections sometimes. If you have happiness in your life, making money will come easier. If the happiness is not there, everything gets locked up. Happiness gives you a clear mind for how to make choices.

Also, there is the role of music as social healing and ritual. Music gives a lot to human life. Whatever you’re going through, just listen to traditional African music, feel the energy that comes from it. I can just let go and feel human. It makes your heart and soul healthy. Otherwise things pile up.

Music is my passion, and I can’t live without it. I dream about it when I go to bed. I get up, the music has me and carries everywhere I go. African traditional music is the most powerful thing in this world. Anytime I touch a drum, I can feel that glory coming from my soul. I can see myself totally transformed and connected to the music. It is a medicine and a healer. It has given me so much, changed my life, makes me strong, and I have become a better person. It connects me to my ancestors in a spiritual way. So it’s very deep to me, not a casual practice.

Some Africans may have very little, but enjoy life so much, appreciate interactions so much. Only a few people do that here. You must create enjoyment for yourself in order to foster that in a child.
Mawuenyega Mensah is from Ghana, West Africa. He has lived in the USA since 2002. He became a US citizen in May 2011. Since living in Colorado, learning how to communicate with people in English has been his biggest challenge. BoulderReads! has helped him breakthrough barriers and become a better human being. He says, “Living in the USA, if you can’t speak English, people may think something is wrong with your brain. The language barrier is like a different culture.” Even when he is frustrated speaking English, it motivates him to learn even more. Before, he felt in the dark, but today, his tutors have supported him in emerging from that darkness. Mawuenyega has also improved his math skills, spoken publicly at the BoulderReads! Reading Progress Celebration, and is reading for fun. He has more confidence overall in himself as a reader, writer and communicator of English.

Mawuenyega’s tutor, Jeffry Büechler, learns as much as he teaches while tutoring for BoulderReads! At other times, he enjoys carpentering, running with friends, dipping in lakes and streams, and saying “yes” to fun. He feels tremendously lucky to love and be loved by a woman who said “yes” to him in August!
My name is Carmen. I came from Mexico on February 18th, 1990. I was three months pregnant with my first child, Christian.

When I came to El Paso from Ciudad Juarez I had to cross the Rio Grande River. A man helped me. He had a business helping people cross the river. He asked for five dollars. I crossed the river sitting on a piece of wood on top of a rubber tube. I was pulled by the man with a long piece of rope across the river. I jumped fences and came to downtown El Paso, Texas. Here I met my husband who was waiting for me. He already had a USA green card and worked as a waiter in El Paso.

We took an airplane to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and a bus to Denver, Colorado. One of my friends in Ciudad Juarez had two daughters in Boulder. She told me to stay with one of her daughters. We did not know anyone else in the US. I remember that the weather was bad. There was a blizzard in Boulder. I had never before seen it snow. We did not have jackets, only sweaters, and we did not have boots, only regular shoes.

My husband got a job washing dishes and applied for a green card for me. While I waited, I cleaned houses and worked in a factory. After waiting six years for the green card, I finally got it. Five years later, after studying US history for two months, I became a US citizen!

I remember when I came to Boulder I didn’t speak any English. I went to an English class for six months after my son, Christian, was born. I didn’t go back to school then, but I know I learned some more words in English. In 1993 I went back to school for seven months to study English again. Then my first daughter was born. I stopped going to school. My twin girls were born in 2000.

In 2002, I went back to school again to study English at Front Range Community College for four semesters. I wanted to learn more because I knew I didn’t have a good vocabulary and I didn’t know how to write good sentences.

I heard about BoulderReads! from a coworker in 2011. I went to BoulderReads! at the library and asked for information for GED classes. Eleanor gave me a test and she said, "You need a tutor." I have more than a year of working with my tutor. I know that I write better now. My sentences are more complete and people now understand me.

I came to the USA because I wanted a better life for me and my family. I now have this better life and am very happy.
Carmen Rojas was born in Texcaltitlan, Mexico, and has lived in Colorado for 22 years. She and her family lived in Boulder for 12 years, and now reside in Erie. She is married to her husband, Jesus, and they have four children. Christian is 22 years old, Getsemani is 19 years old, and the twins, Melissa and Bianca, are 12 years old. Carmen discovered BoulderReads! through a coworker and has been a student for a year. She has just finished reading her first book Tuesdays With Morrie. This story is her first major undertaking as an author. Carmen likes BoulderReads!, “because it has taught me a lot about reading and writing.”

Carmen was not able to continue her education past ninth grade because her town did not have a high school. She wants to complete her GED so that she has more job opportunities available to her. Besides improving basic reading skills such as comprehension, fluency and increased vocabulary, Carmen is now able to communicate better in different settings, especially her workplace. Carmen regularly writes in a journal, uses a dictionary and reads the newspaper.

Carmen’s tutor, Sandy Barnes, has been working with Carmen since May 2012. She lives in Boulder with her husband and daughter. She has been part of BoulderReads! for two years. Sandy is retired and is pleased to be able to help others learn to enjoy reading as much as she does.
In the beginning of school, it was not great for me. I was in special education classes all through school. In middle school it was okay. I didn’t get along with other students and some of the teachers when I got to high school. I never went to class and got bad grades.

When I was fifteen I started drinking and taking drugs. I had to learn how to take care of myself and make money.

Last December something happened to me and I knew I had to make a change. So I started GED class at BoulderReads! I went to summer school this last summer. In summer school there were people from every different country in the world.

My goal is to get into the clean energy field to get a job. Maybe I’ll go into one of the fields such as solar, wind energy, and auditing for energy efficiency. Passing the GED is the first big step.
Since I have been with BoulderReads! I think about what my future holds and the opportunity to be able to go to a community college to pursue a certificate in early childhood education. The skills that I have learned with my tutor have helped me be a part of my children’s education, and I am better able to help them with reading books and homework.

I have learned if you work hard, in the long run you’ll be rewarded. I was honored to accept an award from the Boulder Rotary Club, and I’m thankful to Diana Sherry for nominating me. Since I have received this award I have felt more confident and ready to make my dream come true.

Jessica Mathiesen is a stay-at-home mom. She has lived in Colorado her whole life. She loves the outdoors and being with family and friends. Since enrolling in BoulderReads! over five years ago, her skills and confidence have improved immensely and now she hopes to enroll in community college. She also reads to her children with more ease.

Jessica struggled with comprehension, spelling and writing difficulties throughout high school but was still able to graduate from a local high school. When Jessica joined BoulderReads! over five years ago, she wanted to be more comfortable with her reading and writing skills. After five years in BoulderReads!, her tutors have supported her phonics, sight word and vocabulary development. Her retention of written materials has also increased. Jessica continues to learn more important everyday life skills such as writing checks, reading nutritional labels, using a dictionary, and improving her math skills. She has significantly increased the amount of time she now spends reading to her children and helping them with their homework. Jessica was awarded the Rotary Outstanding Adult Learner Award in 2012.

Jessica’s tutor, Joann Walsh, is a retired social worker who moved to Colorado five years ago from the East Coast. She enjoys the outdoors life, traveling, and reading. Having worked together for four years, Joann is very proud of Jessica’s perseverance and hard work.
Koundian—My village, my home, for two years of service in the Peace Corps. The best way to begin to describe my village is through the experience of the journey getting there – down long sun-beaten dusty roads of the sub-Saharan.

From the comfort of the dark cool air-conditioned cave of the Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) common house bunk, I wake – early – just as the sun begins to rise. Feeling uncertain if I want to take the journey of some 40 kilometers, I just go through the motions, knowing once the fog of sleep lifts from my brain, I will be fine. Careful not to disturb the other volunteers’ slumber, I have my breakfast and head out.

The buzzing and beeping noises of the night still carry on the air as I roll through an otherwise seemingly deserted town. Our PCV hut lies amongst numerous white boxes of double-wide trailers forming the Western labor village constructed for the dam project. My bike tires quickly find pavement, the major arteries of the dam. I trace its long contours, quite a symbol of the West’s march into the interiors of Africa. A distance down lies Manantali – shanties of tin roofs and mud huts exploded by an influx of African labor for the dam.

As I ride by, I can hear the soft hum of trucks off in the distant market square – a large vacant lot of hardened earth. The hues of orange coloring in the landscape grow brighter with the rising sun. The hope is to make it to my village before the blazing heat of high noon hits. The dam goes as far as the dam. Crossing the dam looking back, I can see the Baffling River running off into the horizon with the dam waters behind me—a valley basin with gently climbing rock formations rising on either side. A distance halfway between the dam and the labor village lies Manantali, sandwiched between the river to its left and the parallel road to its right. For most of the year, the terrain is barren and dry as a desert covered with sparse scrub brush and scraggy trees – a valley basin with gently climbing rock formations rising on either side.

Once on the other side of the dam, the road turns to dirt and the real journey into Mali’s rural landscape begins. I forget the names of the villages. Most immediate, just on the other side of the dam, is a PCV village, small, about 100 or so, followed by a couple more of equal size. In the morning they lie quiet, on return visits from my village, they are alive with children running to the edge of the road to watch and cheer as I ride by. Then the road is barren for miles with gentle climbs and descents. The journey by bike gives a sense for the remoteness of the villages, the dry harshness of the land, and how much they must rely on each other.

On one journey back to a village, I remember finding shelter from the rains in a small village of one family, miles from nowhere. A quiet simple family. We sat and watched in silence from the door of a hut as the rains beat the hard ground. The light from the doorway showed the profile expression of the father looking out – stoic, weathered, but full of grace and humility – of a people worn tender by the harshness of the landscape and the struggle to provide from it.

By the time the sweat forms like grains of salt on my brow – noon steadily approaching – I arrive atop a steep set of switchbacks that descend into a wide valley bellow, where Koundian and the villages of its Arrondissement reside.
A large flat rock overlooks the valley offering distant views. It is a great place for a brief rest and drink before taking the plunge. The sharp hairpin road is made of cement and littered on either side with the carcasses of many vehicles which took turns too quickly. One such wreckage happened during my service. I never learned of the casualties. I wondered but never asked; life here in Africa comes with many risks better left unexpressed – less fear to swallow, I imagine. I do remember taking a subsequent trip atop a Mack truck heaped high with market goods, where all of us insisted on dismounting and walking down the road’s steep precipice. I would have mindlessly gone on if it weren’t for the other passengers’ fear and persistence raising concern in me that something was wrong – out of place. The driver and his henchmen assistants laughed at us as they cruised down reckless and careless. Insh’Allah – if Allah wills it. I remember conversations among volunteers use the expression to explain this behavior. A “screw-it-all” cockiness; if it is my time, so be it – Insh’Allah. I don’t know how some get this way. Is it the futility of it all, or some false bravado? Some sort of sun madness? I never bothered trying to get up that hill by bike, but did enjoy the swift coast down and the brief breeze it generates.

Koundian isn’t much farther beyond this point. By now I should know every tree, rock, and bend in the road, but still I round each turn hoping it is my last. Delirium – more from the heat then muscle fatigue – carries me the last stretch, a sort of mindless momentum. The pinging of the high sun fragments my thoughts and drains my will. I stagger on feeling its full weight – its oppression – down around me.

I round the bend and I arrive.

Freedom. Freedom to be myself. It has been my struggle to be comfortable among my peers. I know it well: it embodies me – my actions or lack thereof. I have spent far too much time trying to figure out what it is that is wrong with me – why I can’t fit in. (There is nothing unique about this struggle, I know.) But the desire for acceptance and the agony that surrounds it has always prevented me from being myself, it seems. Always careful with what I say and do. Most of the time in groups, I am stone silent, untouchable, like an observer from a distant planet not knowing the customs or language. At times I can throw them off the trail of that which I hide – in shame – of what I feel I lack – with laughter. It’s an awkward comedy I perform and it just takes time to forge with others –from a place of comfort. It is a vehicle I can use to escape the head-trip of self-criticism. This space has been a container I have build in the past with friends and in the workplace. But it isn’t happening here, in country, among my fellow volunteers. Something feels too much like middle school – cliquey – with a desperate need to fit in. We PCV Mali are the only semblance of American culture where our self-identities can find anchor from outside the madness of village life. The desperate need to connect with your own is strong when all of who you are is in question. No reassurance or
comfort is found here in how you look and act through the usual checks and balances of the framework that forged you back in the States. Am I only mad if I am alone and sane in association? The experience of PCV Mali is like an island where everyone is racing to higher ground, piling on top of each other, before high tide rolls in. At most times, I felt far out to sea without an oar or even the desire to make it to land.

But in the village, amongst the Malians, I am accepted. If off-site life was a social wreck, which I take responsibility for, then my on-site life was a dream by comparison. I chocked it up to them just not knowing what an American is suppose to act like. So all my inner struggles melted away. Not to say there weren’t social challenges and hurdles to overcome working and living within the village, and then there was the rock-star treatment. I felt strong in myself – how and who I should be. Malians are an open and welcoming people – generous – giving what little they have. If one family eats, the village eats.

My sense of community and the search for it back home in the States stems from that experience. I thought it was engrained in the routine and traditions of the day – every day the same, punctuated by the same conversations and same jokes followed by one round of tea after another – under sweltering noonday sun or evening lamplight. It is interesting how such fond memories can be found in doing “more of the same” where “more of the same” means something different in the States. Where it means being had or cheated of your time and not being filled. I don’t know where I am going in life, but I am beginning to understand more of where I have been.

Here in the States, I am back in the confines of myself – the pressures of everything around me being reinterpreted through my insecurities and pushing out from within – waiting to explode. What is wrong with me becomes compounded by the pressures to be somebody, to have a future, to possess all you need to get there and then finally to rest when you arrive. I don’t know if there is ever any rest here or full sense of acceptance. That would mean fulfillment and that cannot be bought…our American way of life is predicated on the idea that all these can be found in the market place and requires us, as good consumers, to buy the next latest and greatest. What if not being good enough is an ailment of far more than just myself. It is a way of life that feeds on our insecurities leaving us hollow and never satisfied and prevents us from truly connecting with each other.

What I do remember is that some of the strongest moments of feeling fulfilled – at rest and feeling good enough – were in Mali doing nothing.

*A gidron is a cement road, a Malian freeway.

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Brian Crawford joined BoulderReads! in 2006 after struggling throughout high school and college, never feeling like he could read and understand his schoolwork with proficiency. Brian felt he was continuously shuffled around in various Special Education programs, receiving several different diagnoses such as vision tracking problems, sensitivity to light, and concentration challenges, but never receiving the appropriate assistance to overcome these obstacles. He wanted to improve his reading comprehension and fluency skills, as well as his writing and proofreading skills. Because Brian and his tutors have focused their energy on improving his basic reading and writing skills through reading texts repeatedly and out-loud, he now reports reading and writing for fun. He also finds himself more comfortable with computer skills such as keyboarding, word processing, Internet searching and email. Brian is now considering a career in Community Development and has been practicing many different skills to prepare him for this shift. These include writing resumes, filling out applications and job searching, as well as improving his workplace skills at his current job, which have already resulted in his receiving a raise.

Brian’s tutor is Steve Todd, a Boulder resident for five years since retiring from the retail/small business world in Estes Park. A “serial careerist” with degrees in Biology, Theology, and Human Resource Development, Steve has also worked as a corporate training manager, organization development consultant, minister, radio DJ, and newspaper columnist. His goals now include continued lifelong learning, giving back to the community, environmental activism, travel, and, of course, writing the great American novel, thereby helping to change the world. Brian is Steve’s first partner in BoulderReads! and they have been reading and writing happily together since June.
My name is Erika Nunez. I am from Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. I have been living in Colorado for 10 years. My secret to enjoying life and being happy is to enjoy what I do every day in my work. Sometimes I have worked only because I needed the money.

When I came here it was so difficult because I did not speak English. I took the first opportunity to work. I started working as a housekeeper in the hospital. I was not happy. Every day I was so sad because I did not like that job, but I needed the money.

I did not like to be a housekeeper because I felt a lot of discrimination, even when I did a great job. Nurses, doctors, and almost every person who has a title look down on other people who do not have any title. They did not know I had feelings.

One day I was so scared because I had to clean the morgue. I told my manager I did not want to clean there because the smell was so bad. There always were dead bodies, knives, and blood on the floors. I had to clean every night after 11 p.m. She told me, “If you do not clean there, you will be fired!” So I had to clean every night.

Another time I was sitting on a bench outside of the office on my break, and the manager screamed “YOU CANNOT BE SITTING HERE BECAUSE YOU ARE A HOUSEKEEPER!” That hurt my feelings.
Another time I was cleaning the men's bathroom. Even though a doctor saw me there cleaning, he used the bathroom. He did not care that I was there. I felt I was nothing and dumb. I can go on and on, and I will never finish.

One day I finished cleaning the morgue, like every night, and I saw a sign that said “DO SOMETHING YOU LOVE.” I felt that touch my heart. The next day I went to a beauty school. I always wanted to be a stylist. I went to the school for a year and a half. I started school every day at 7:45 a.m. and finished at 5 p.m. I had to hurry to be in the hospital at 5:30 p.m. and got off from work at 1:30 a.m. It was so hard. I was so positive, thinking of my graduation day. Finally I finished my school and I graduated, and I’m proud of myself.

I met a very nice person. Her name is Vanessa Ramirez. Since I started working as a stylist, she has believed in my skills. She is my manager. She is very patient and is a positive person. I have been doing hair for six years. My work is different and fun every day. I meet very nice people, and I feel positive and happy.

I think it is very fun if you love what you do. That makes my life happy and makes me confident. Every person can fight for her dreams, no matter how difficult.

**Erika Nunez** is working in the best shop in Boulder, FLOYDS 99. She has a beautiful girl who is two years old. Erika was unable to continue her education past 11th grade in Mexico because she needed to support her family. She is proud to read more to her daughter and has seen improvements with her reading comprehension skills, vocabulary base and basic math skills as she works towards attaining her GED. Since joining BoulderReads!, she is reading more for fun and has even bought a home.

Erika's tutor, **Ellen Burgess**, is a practicing architect. They met through the Family Literacy Program in January of 2012 and have worked together in BoulderReads! since March. Ellen is in awe of Erika’s strength and perseverance.
Just last week I turned 23 years old and I knew that this would be the birthday of a lifetime. As soon as I woke up a burst of shock and excitement rushed through me; I was ready for my horseback adventure exploring through the mountains of Estes Park. My horse was named after Will Kane, the US Marshall from that movie *High Noon*. It was a bit tricky keeping my balance at first, but I quickly got used to it. I was off charging on my bucking bronco down steep bumping mountains and up steep cliffs, enjoying the scenery and the cool, damp breeze on the way. I learned a few tricks to communicate with this majestic animal. To make Kane stop or slow down, pull on the reins evenly. To make Kane speed up, very lightly nudge the horse’s side with your foot. Steer with the reins.

Afterwards we picked up my mom and drove all the way to Watercourse in Denver to enjoy a vegan dinner. We split an order of sweet, crispy vegan chicken wings and light, flaky, golden onion rings. For my main course I had smoky, vegetable enchiladas with chipotle sauce and ground vegan sausage over a bed of creamy black bean polenta. When we were done eating our gourmet meals, I saw our server coming with a big rich four-layered German chocolate cake with three types of frosting: dense fudge ganache topped with light buttery mousse, and lined with sweet caramel coconut. It was all presented to us on a golden platter that must have been molded by the gods. It was good.

Back at home I unwrapped my presents---a diving knife, earphones, and a food dehydrator. I really can’t wait till I can test out my food dehydrator. My head is already coming up with great ideas for recipes. This is really a day to remember and I hope to do it again next year.

**Danny Thompson–Dalldorf** has lived in Colorado for 18 years. Since beginning with BoulderReads! two years ago, his reading comprehension and sight word base has improved. He has focused on research related to health, diet, organic vegan cooking, animal rights, and politics. Danny is a sous-chef, and plans to pursue a career in culinary arts. Danny is an accomplished scuba diver, frequently enjoying diving trips in the Caribbean with his family.

Danny and his tutor also report seeing improvement in Danny’s basic computer skills, comprehension of written material and an impressive list of life skills such as using online banking, finding and reserving library materials, reading recipes and newspapers, filling out forms and understanding directions better. He has gotten a better job and improved his on-the-job skills since enrolling in BoulderReads! as well.

Danny’s tutor, **Guruji Khalsa**, completed her Master of Accounting and Financial Management Degree in 2011. She has lived in Boulder for 31 years. Danny is her first BoulderReads! student, and she loves teaching for the program.
I am from Spain and I am attending BoulderReads! I started in June. When I was a child we didn’t have money for books, and one friend loaned me one to read. We didn’t have electricity and my mother asked me to bring some paper to light up the chimney, and that was the end of the only book. This incident was very disturbing to me because I had borrowed that book from a neighbor. So, the same morning I told my mother that the book was burned and when my friend came to play we told her. She was very understanding; she definitely was a friend.

I never was encouraged to learn, and learning in the scholastic way was never easy or fun to me. I didn’t read or write until I was 10 years old. I look to my older brother’s books more for curiosity than any other thing.

In my country, at that time, we were living under tremendous oppression. After the civil war in Spain (from 1936 to 1939), the people that were living in certain areas were more affected to the point that bombing destroyed everything they had and they needed to start from zero with very little resources. My family was one of those. The worst thing was that my mother was traumatized for life. (Those are the terrible consequences that innocent people have to suffer.)

Generalissimo Franco won the war. He ruled the country by military forces for more than 40 years. Spanish people were very isolated from the rest of the world and all the literature use in the country was very restricted. Also, movies and artistic expression had very strict censorship from the Catholic Church.

To finish with this, Franco married the church and then controlled the country for too long a time; I was one of the many that had to live in it. We didn’t have freedom of the press (or expression) and being a woman, my future (they thought) was to marry and have children (many children, as the only church allowed to practice was the Catholic).

The worst was that women couldn’t have money in their own name and could not have a checking account. Nobody can imagine the limitations of being a girl in in the south of Spain and in other countries until today. I wanted to be happy so I went with the flow. It was not acceptable to do anything else and I had no source of information for other possibilities. I had no money to go to another country. I learned to be a survivor and be creative for my everyday needs.

Continuing with my education: At this moment I need to learn English for survival in this country. It is my hope to have a better job in the future. I will like to be a translator for Spanish-speaking people in the medical field, possibly in a hospital. I can’t dwell in the past and I know that other people have it worse. In this time of my life I am happy to have the opportunity to put all this together and I definitely will acquire more knowledge of the U.S.A. as a diverse and interesting country.

I know that I am making my path as I walk through this program, and I say “THANK YOU” to all of you for your help. I am working since I was 10 years old and I am now 65. You never say never: “Nunca digas de este agua no beberé.” Never say “I will never drink of these waters.” It’s never too late.

Sincerely,

Maria
Maria Montejo spent her youth in Córdoba, in southern Spain, and then moved to the capital, Madrid, when she was 22. When she was about 30, she moved to Florida with her husband and baby. She had to return to Madrid seven years later, when her husband became terminally ill. Years later, her daughter moved to Colorado. For a few years, Maria travelled back and forth between Spain and Colorado, visiting her daughter. Three grandchildren arrived in five years, and Maria helped out when she visited. In 2001, Maria’s daughter became ill and Maria decided to move to Colorado to help raise the children. The grandchildren are growing up fast: they are 19, 16, and 15 years old. Currently, Maria works as a live-in caretaker for an elderly couple. “Sometimes life is tough,” says Maria, “and you feel stuck, but you just have to swallow the potato,” as in the Spanish idiom.

Maria enrolled in BoulderReads! in May of 2012 and started lessons in June. She is excited to be learning how to write in English and is just beginning to use a computer. She is thrilled to have her own email account. Maria is also writing in a journal now, practicing grammar, punctuation and organization techniques and learning more vocabulary words. She has also written letters to her grandkids recently. She has improved her confidence in reading and writing as well as in herself.

Maria’s tutor, Miriam Sproul, is a retired information technology project manager. Maria is her first BoulderReads! student. She is very proud of the progress that Maria has made in just a short time in the program. When she is not working with Maria, Miriam enjoys studying music and languages. She also volunteers as a mentor for the Project Management Institute.
My Life in Ecuador
by Michael Queen

When I was 18 years old I had just finished my last year of high school. I was in a relationship that was going nowhere and I wasn't doing anything except running around with the wrong crowd. So, one night after staying out late and partying with my friends, I came home around 11:00 the next day. My mother was waiting for me and she asked me if I would like to go to Ecuador for the summer and study Spanish. At this point I already had been to France and Spain and I loved it. So without even knowing where Ecuador was I told my mother to sign me up at Front Range Community College to go and live with a host family.

The next week I got my vaccinations and I went to meet the 25 other students who were going on the trip. It turned out I was the youngest and the only one who didn't speak a word of Spanish. I felt a little uncomfortable—kind of like an outsider.

It was a month-long class in a school in Cuenca called C.E.I., Centro de Estudios Internacionales. After the month was over it was time to go home. It seemed that I hadn't learned anything but I wasn't ready to give up yet. So when I got back to the States I spoke to my family about sending me back right away.

I went back this time completely on my own. By luck I met two famous artists, Juan Kisa and Miguel Tinizary, who were renting a room in their studio. I spent the next few years traveling and going to art exhibitions with them and at this point I was learning Spanish well and learning the culture. I really wanted to see the rest of South America and the only way I could pay for it besides the help from my family was by being a guide for European tourists.

After a few years of that, I returned to Guayaquil and purchased the neighborhood bar. My wife, Rosa, and I worked there for a few years until my children were born. Then in 2008, I caught dengue fever as a result of a mosquito bite, and I had to return to the U.S. with my wife and children, Benny, Nora, and Matthew.

After 10 years in Ecuador it was time to start my life in the U.S., but I hope to go back and live there again someday.

I want to thank my mother, Nancy, for making all my adventures possible. I love you, Mom.

Michael Queen was born in Boulder in 1980. After spending 10 years in Ecuador, he returned to Longmont where he lives with his children, Benny, Nora, and Matthew. He has been working with his BoulderReads! tutor at the Boulder County Jail for two months. His goal is to pass the GED, and is currently focusing on the Math and Writing subtests.

Michael's tutor, Stephanie Work, grew up in Istanbul and Rome, and she has also lived in Tehran, Berlin, and France. She has a Master’s in Linguistics and has taught English as a Second Language in several universities. She has been a BoulderReads! tutor for three years and has worked with a number of students at the Boulder County Jail.
Over the past six years, I have been seeing most of my friends volunteer. It looks like something they enjoy and are very proud of doing. One of my friends always says that “volunteering makes the difference by helping someone or something.” I decided to give it a try a few months ago and do it just for fun.

I began volunteering at a food bank that is a nonprofit organization. We collect food from private and public sources and distribute it to low-income families and individuals who are having a hard time putting food on their tables. I volunteer every first and third Saturday morning for three hours. I help at the front desk, work in the warehouse, and I help clients to shop for their groceries by making sure they get the appropriate amounts of products they want.

I love this new job and experience of volunteering because my co-workers and clients are kind and I am learning a lot from them. My co-workers are very nice, respectful, and easygoing, and we help each other whenever we need it. I am able to learn a lot about other cultures because my co-workers and clients are from different backgrounds. My favorite thing to do is help clients get their food, because most of our clients are sweet, and I have the chance to meet and interact with new people. It is priceless when I see their excited and happy faces every time they get their bags full of food to feed their loved ones. I tend to get emotional when I see little kids with big, bright smiles on their angelic faces getting a box of cereal, yogurt, or whatever they like. For example, the other day a little Chinese girl blew me a kiss to say thank-you. She made my day! Also, another family brought us homemade enchiladas for lunch. I love it because one way or the other clients take their own time to thank us for what we do for them.

I feel good about being able to volunteer and help someone else. It makes me feel worthwhile and good about myself. I feel like I am doing something positive to help have a better world by trying to fight hunger. It makes me feel blessed for being able to have food on my table for my family.

Volunteering is a unique and invaluable experience to do. It is a blessing and a gift that not everyone can have or give. The result and experience of being able to be a volunteer is invaluable. Now I understand why volunteering makes my friends so happy because I understand the wonderful feeling of being able to help the most in need.

Mayra Rivera graduated from High School, but joined BoulderReads! because she felt she still needed to improve her writing and spelling skills. Working for over five years with several different tutors, Mayra feels she has not only become a better writer but has also dramatically improved her confidence in reading and speaking skills. This has led to her enrolling in a college level English-as-a-Second-Language entrepreneur program, and even starting her own business. Setting her sites on becoming a CPA, Mayra can see a bright future for herself because of the dedication she has put into her time as a BoulderReads! student.

Mayra’s tutor, Monica Munguía, is a Colorado native who has been working with Mayra for six months. She looks forward to their meetings because she enjoys learning more about her student each week and being kept on her toes by Mayra’s challenging questions.
A 17 year-old Palestinian immigrant, a young man left his country with only a suitcase full of dreams. His dreams were to find the way to make money to help his parents, to become a successful businessman, and someday return to his country. He knew that to achieve this dream he would have to make many sacrifices, like adapting to a new culture and learning a new language. It wouldn’t be easy.

Latif was the third of four siblings, and the most ambitious and eager to succeed. He made a decision to move to Santa Helena del Guairen, Venezuela, with his uncle, who owned a store. Latif was very smart. In a short time, he became his uncle’s right-hand man while learning Spanish and making many friends. After many months of hard work he asked his uncle for some money to send to his parents. His uncle answered, “I think a place to live and food is enough for payment.” Latif felt very sad and disappointed at the same time, but he didn’t want to give up his dream. He promised his family as well as himself that he would be able to provide a better life for them. He knew that he would face many obstacles. Latif kept faith in himself and with a broken heart left his uncle’s home.

An old man who Latif met in his uncle’s store said, “Latif, many people like you. You are a good man and a hard worker. Come work for me as a driver.” Latif was happy to accept the job. His job was driving an old jeep, picking up tourists from the airport and taking them to the small city of Santa Elena. His boss was very fair and paid him enough money to send to his parents and to survive by himself as well.

Latif was a popular driver. Eventually, customers only wanted to use his service. As time passed, he was able to buy a car from the old man and start his own driving business. Latif learned Spanish very well and felt more confident. When he had extra money he bought merchandise like fabrics and blankets and sold them door-to-door. Latif sacrificed in many ways so that he could save every penny. For many months he wore the same pants, shirt, socks, shoes, and even underwear. But for Latif, everything was worth all his sacrifice to have his own store.

One day Latif received an invitation from a close Palestinian friend who lived in Puerto Rico, asking if he wanted to sell merchandise like area rugs, watches, shoes, and more as a street vendor in Puerto Rico. Latif liked the idea and moved there. He had good luck and loved the beautiful island of Puerto Rico, so much that he stayed for 15 years. He received his United States citizenship, saved a lot of money and then came back with the experience and knowledge to open his own store in Venezuela. In honor of Puerto Rico, he named his store Comercial Borinquen.

Latif never moved back to Palestine, but put down roots and married a Venezuelan girl. But, his love for his native country remained strong in his heart. Now Latif is 78 years old. He has eight grown children and 21 grandchildren. He feels proud of his beginnings and where he has come from. He has made Comercial Borinquen a very successful store, which has been in business for 40 years.

Latif finally achieved his dreams. He gave to his parents and brothers a better life, and he visited them many times. As his wealth increased, he never changed his values and his noble heart and was forever grateful to Venezuela. He is now a successful businessman with the same passion and persistence, but today his dreams are to move closer to his family and enjoy the fruits of his labor as a father and grandfather.
I am proud to say that Latif is my father-in-law. He is a man I love and respect. His legacy to us and to those who are inspired by his story is this: find your passion, believe in yourself, work hard, and be prepared for obstacles, help those around you, be proud of your heritage, and don't let others keep you from your dreams. And finally, never ever give up.

**Martha Hweih** was born in Colombia. She moved to Venezuela when she was 12, where she met and married her husband twenty years ago. They have two children, Kathy and Kaylee. They moved to the United States in 1996. Martha is proud to have recently earned her United States citizenship, to have voted for the first time and to have bought a home. Since enrolling in BoulderReads! four years ago she has improved her reading, writing, and math skills and is enrolled in GED classes (offered in partnership between BoulderReads! and the Boulder Valley Family Literacy Program). She earned a certificate in Child Care and, as a result, has gotten a new job. She is able to better support her children in school because she can communicate better with their teachers and school administrators. Her goals are to continue her education at Front Range Community College and then transfer to a four-year degree program, and to continue to become more independent and confident. This is the fourth year Martha has authored a story in Discoveries. She regularly writes in a journal and authors other stories. Martha is grateful to BoulderReads! staff, donors to the program, her GED instructors and her tutor for all their support.

Martha's tutor, **Kay Ingram**, started tutoring a year ago with BoulderReads! but has been a longtime volunteer in the community. She lives with her husband, Neal, in Longmont and has two grown children, Jean and Patrick. Working with Martha has been a wonderful experience for Kay and she looks forward to helping Martha achieve her goals!
Story (fiction): This story was inspired by a dark moment in Marcos’ life that was dominated by a lie against him. Although Marcos was sad about it, he decided to turn that bad energy into something constructive and healing for him.

This ancient account has been whispered in my ears by the gods of ancient Greece. It speaks of the time when the gods came down from Mount Olympus to live among men here on the Earth. The great Greek historian Herodotus and other poets have written fabulous accounts of these events. These stories are so fabulous that they have given us the term: fables.

“When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8.44. In the golden era of the VIII Century BC, on the Peloponnesian Peninsula, once again the Olympic celebration, the most elaborate of all festivities, was celebrated with competitors from every colony of the land of Greece.

Opening the festival, a large parade of athletes, judges, and priests marched toward the immense statue of Zeus, where they pledged loyalty to the games and brought offerings to honor the great god of the Greeks.

Only the men were granted the honor of participating in the games, but now there were two exceptions. Deception, wanting to settle her differences with Truth, challenged her in the games and, for this reason, both descended to earth.

Truth, the first daughter of Time and Honor, almost matched the goddess of beauty, Aphrodite, such was her beauty; meanwhile her archrival, the treacherous Deception, older sister of Libel and Jealousy, boasted to everyone about her determination to overthrow Truth at any cost.

So there they were, ready for the triathlon: wrestling, jumping hurdles, and finally, swimming across the straits of the Ionian Sea.

In their first confrontation, Truth fought so frankly and openly, as had always been her style.

Deception, in her falsehood, slipped up and was injured. Deception, who was bigger and larger, used deceitful tactics in wrestling; pretending to be the victim of a lack of Truth, she applied a blow so low that she confused Minerva, judge of proof, who declared Deception the winner.

Noisy men, who at the outset were already sympathizers with Deception, said she was winning against Truth in the first clash.

Then came the next stage of the triathlon: the hurdle-jumping. Deception ran loose and fast, but Truth, despite her previous injury, never stopped before any obstacle and was determined to pass one after another.

Deception preferred an easier path and, again, did not respect the rules of honor and nobility that governed those Olympic games. She separated from Truth, took a shortcut through a swamp, not caring about getting covered in mud. She once again used her vile strategies, and once more defeated Truth.

They arrived, thus, at the third and last contest which was also the most difficult of all: their challenge was to swim across the Ionian Sea at the isthmus between Corinth and Delphi.
All competitors now would be monitored closely by a small boat, taking each of them, and by a technical coach for each athlete, who would encourage them or, in case of withdrawal by fatigue, bring them back in the boat to shore in defeat.

Deception, who had won the first competitions in this tournament, first launched herself on water. She was swimming ahead, and close to her, her trainer, Pride, criticized her regarding her weakness, her poor technique, and her fear. He knew that hearing his harsh words would be stimulating to Deception.

Truth dove in bravely to swim the difficult isthmus. She was coached by Virtue, who guided her faithfully as to her direction, her speed, and her technique.

Deception, who was always heavy, became increasingly slow in the water. The forces that had not shown themselves before now started to clarify the difference between the two contestants. With every stroke, the waters and the elements seemed to conspire against Deception, weighing her down more and more. Soon her body was without the strength or ability to remain on the surface, for she had already swallowed a large quantity of water. Her coach and trainer now shouted desperately to Deception, calling her to return to the boat.

Exhausted, Deception began to sink. Terrified to see herself so far from success in this final event, Deception tenaciously grabbed hold of her coach, Pride, pulling him into the sea in a desperate and futile effort to save herself.

Ultimately, neither one nor the other could be saved. Truth soon reached the beach and achieved victory. She was proclaimed the winner of the triathlon and was received by both men and gods.

Time was passing and it took all Truth's strength to remain confident and to persevere in her arduous task.

The day was festive and, on the beach, a huge crowd was divided into two groups, one with the twisted men who hoped that Deception would triumph, while the other contained those who were cheering for Truth to prevail.

Proteus, along with various nymphs, naiads, and many other water gods invisible to human eyes, closely accompanied the competition, and between themselves placed bets as to who would win. Nearby, Neptune, god of the seas, placidly noted their dispute as he observed the race.

Oh, but the oracles of the whole of the Greece already knew who would have the day!

Deception, who by her nasty and underhanded means had twice won, could not now circumvent the brother of Zeus, the powerful Neptune. Nor could she rely again on shortcuts to get her closer to the great moment of the truth!
Crowned with an olive branch and covered with flowers that had been thrown to her in her triumphal march, Truth was charged by Virtue and Time with all the honors of the Temple of Zeus. Truth knew nothing about Deception.

Even when young, Deception had begun to use various ways, means, and masks to circumvent Truth. Because of this, sooner or later, when Truth eventually prevailed and won, the Greeks of that era eventually understood what had generated the entire dispute.

Nevertheless, Truth, who always had a noble spirit, still felt deep regret that Deception had died a terrible death by drowning on the day of Truth’s victory.

Truth arrived at the Temple of Zeus at dusk.

Indifferent to all the tributes and to the great party being celebrated in her honor that night, Truth rowed back into the isthmus.

In the moonlight, as she pondered the events in the competition, she observed far at sea, a small boat bringing a body from the waters.

The night was clear and Truth recognized, terrified, the body of Deception.

One who pulled the fishing net along was an old fisherman named Forgiveness.

Marcos Serra is a multitalented Brazilian artist, actor, and singer. He also sculpts, paints, and writes poetry and songs. In Brazil, he needed to go to work to help support his family, resulting in him leaving school in 8th grade. Because Marcos wrote music and poetry avidly in Portuguese, he knew that he needed to improve his reading and writing skills in English in order to be comfortable living and succeeding in the United States. He and his tutors have focused their lessons on strengthening his grammar and spelling skills, increasing his vocabulary base by reading poems and literature in English. As a result, Marcos feels increased confidence in his speaking and listening skills, which were his main goals when he entered BoulderReads! two years ago. Marcos has also enrolled in University classes, is reading for fun, and has improved his employment. He has increased his independence in life skills, such as reading contracts, medicine labels, menus and instruction manuals.

Marcos’ tutor, Rachel Yeates, is an avid reader who enjoys sharing her passion for books with others.
Our lives are all about memories, beginning when we’re born, up until we die.

I was born and grew up in a small town where people really knew each other, where I could fly without fear and breathe the freedom. There I built my memories. Those come out of my mind every day, make me remember my life as a child.

I see my grandma as a strong person who taught me to fight for my dreams. She inspires me even today to do new things that I haven’t done before.

My grandma supported us like a true family. Traditions were important in our lives; one of them—Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)—was very important for my grandma and the family because my grandpa died when I was only five years old. I remember those days; my family and I began preparing days before the big traditions, going to the cemetery to clean the graves up, making sure the grass was trimmed or the surrounding ground was swept, and painting the cross. After that, for Dia de los Muertos on November 2nd, my family and I would leave early for the cemetery to visit my grandpa at his new home. There, we brought flowers called cempasuchil cempasúchiles (marigolds) and put water in his crypt so he could drink. We prayed for his soul. Dia de los Muertos was a time for him.

I was a kid who didn’t understand why that day was very important to my grandma until now. That date is to remember family and friends that you love and care for, but are not with us in body, but in soul; we believe they come back that day to visit us. That is why we celebrate.
I feel sad because my grandma is gone and I’m not there to celebrate the big day with her; even though I’m far from her, she is still in my memories. I thank her for teaching me traditions because those built my memories and I continue to believe in them.

We respect the dead and we believe still in life after death.

Luz Rosario Contreras was born in Chihuahua, Mexico. The oldest of three sisters, she came to the US about 13 years ago. Her goal was to go to school, but, as she says, “Destiny had other plans for me.” She has a daughter, Andrea, age seven who “brings brightness to my life.”

She says, “I enrolled in BoulderReads! a couple of years ago. My tutor is an incredible person. Thanks to BoulderReads! and to him, I’m improving my English reading and writing.” Since joining BoulderReads!, Luz has also enrolled in a GED class in order to obtain her GED. She is able to communicate with her daughter’s school and teachers better now, and is reading to her daughter more comfortably and more often. Luz is reading for fun now in English and this has helped to improve her comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and sight word base. She is more comfortable conducting Internet searches on the computer, and in general, is a more confident person when it comes to her English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

Luz’s tutor, Clif Harald, is a Denver native who moved to Boulder in 1971 to earn a liberal arts degree from CU. For a few years he lived in rural Oklahoma as a VISTA volunteer and in Seattle as a grad student, but then returned to Boulder where he soon met his would-be wife, Deb. They’ll celebrate their 24th anniversary next year. He’s been a volunteer tutor in BoulderReads! since 2009.
Our Cats
By Lee Allen Jr.

My wife Kim and I have two cats, Tigger and Martha. At first, everyone thought Tigger was a female, but then we found out “she” was a he. Tigger is lean and bouncy, but Martha is a fat lady who lays around all day. Tigger is a kitten only three or four months old, but Martha is middle-aged. We got her when she was about six years old from a little girl named Belle. She rode the church bus and could not keep her when her family moved. Tigger came from our neighbor Anita when he was only eight weeks old. Most of the time I call him “Tig.”

Tig can jump up on anything. Once I caught him on top of the refrigerator. Martha is older and heavier than he is, so she doesn’t get into as much trouble. We are trying to train him not to jump on the table, so we spray him with a water bottle. It’s really funny to watch him go into reverse and back up anywhere he can to get away from the water. Sometimes, I spin him around on the floor and he gets dizzy, but he likes it. Cats are lots of fun.

Lee Allen Jr. and his wife, Kim, live in Longmont with their cats. Lee enjoys spending time at church, scrapping, and cooking for friends and family. Since enrolling in BoulderReads! seven years ago, he has improved reading skills and is now able to do many things that help him in his daily life, like filling out forms, writing notes, finding movies on the computer, and reading instructions for various projects. He has also passed the driver’s license test, improved his job skills, and worked on learning budgeting skills. Lee and Kim have their own auto mechanic and scrap metal recycling business. In the future, Lee hopes to get his GED, and go to school to become a certified auto mechanic.

Lee’s tutor, Mary Ann Tomasko Perry, grew up in Boulder and has lived here most of her life. She has a background in fine arts, museums, education and anthropology. She has four grown children ages 28-37, and eight grandchildren ages 4 months – 11 years, none of whom live in Colorado! She was a substitute teacher and enjoyed volunteer work with her family while the kids were growing up. She is now exploring her many other interests and is working on improvements to their fixer-upper home. She has enjoyed working with Lee since he began BoulderReads!
Donate Your Car to BoulderReads!

We’ll tow the vehicle, process the title, and sell it at auction.

Support adult literacy.
Get rid of that worn-out car!

303-308-2400
or
www.boulderreads.org
25th Anniversary Video can be seen on our Web page!

In honor of the 25th anniversary of BoulderReads!, Channel 8 has updated the video produced five years earlier; it now includes new interviews with people served by BoulderReads! as well as footage about new program components and partnerships.

To see it go to www.boulderreads.org and scroll down the page a bit until you see the photo with a label “BoulderReads! Celebrates 25 Years.” Click on the photo or on the little play button.
Program Components

The mission of BoulderReads! is to help people discover the power and joy of reading. These are the major components through which this mission is accomplished:

One-on-One Volunteer-Based Literacy Tutoring
Each adult learner enrolling in BoulderReads! is matched to a trained volunteer tutor with whom the learner works 1½ to 3 hours per week. Individual tutoring is very effective because it involves personalized, confidential, and intensive instruction. Each tutor/student pair focuses on the specific goals of that learner, whether those goals are to read to a child, assist a child with homework, get a job, qualify for a promotion, pass the driver’s license test, pass the GED, pass the citizenship test, or learn to read for fun. One-on-one tutoring is also an ideal format through which to address a learner’s own individual learning style, whether he is a visual learner, an auditory learner, a kinesthetic learner, or one who learns through a combination of styles. It also allows the student’s own interests to be addressed by selecting reading materials of appropriate level and topic. One-on-one tutoring is made possible through the support of the City of Boulder, Boulder Public Library, and Boulder County, as well as the in-kind contributions of tutoring time donated by more than 150 volunteer tutors, and by monetary donations from individuals.

Reading buddies
Since 1994 BoulderReads!, has provided 'Reading Buddies' for children of our adult literacy students (and for other at-risk readers when space is available). Each little buddy is matched one-on-one to a big buddy for a semester. The big buddies, all of whom are CU students, receive service-learning credit for the time they volunteer with the Reading Buddies Program. The big buddies are trained by BoulderReads! staff and then donate two hours per week to the program reading to their little buddies and conducting extension activities that support reading and writing. The Reading Buddies program is made possible through a grant from the Boulder Public Library Foundation and in-kind donations from the University of Colorado and its students.

Picturing Writing Workshops
Picturing Writing: Fostering Literacy through Art and Literature is a dynamic approach to teaching developed by Beth Olshansky at the University of New Hampshire. It consists of a series of mini-lessons on art techniques and on literary elements (such as plot development and use of descriptive language) and follows the steps in the “writing as a process” approach. Picturing Writing successfully engages even the most reluctant learners and, although developed primarily for children, has proven effective with adult learners as well. BoulderReads! staff
received training in Picturing Writing in 2002 and now use this format to provide art and writing workshops to adults in our library program and to male and female inmates at the Boulder County Jail. (See upcoming pages for samples of our students’ work from these wonderful workshops.) The Picturing Writing workshops are made possible by grants from Colorado Relay, the Community Foundation Lotus Fund, Barnes & Noble, the Boulder County Jail and donations.

**Boulder County Jail Literacy Services**

BoulderReads! provides one-on-one literacy tutoring to inmates at the Boulder County Jail, in addition to conducting Picturing Writing workshops (see description above) for inmates in the men’s and women’s modules. Literacy instruction at the jail is made possible by the Boulder Library and the City of Boulder and by grants from Boulder County, the Boulder County Jail, and donations.

**Boulder Valley Family Literacy Program**

BoulderReads! is a partner in the Boulder Valley Family Literacy Program, in which families with high educational needs and who are in the Boulder Valley School service area are provided with comprehensive educational opportunities at University Hill, Casey Middle, Emerald Elementary, Sanchez, and Pioneer Elementary Schools. While BoulderReads! provides the parents with one-on-one volunteer-based literacy instruction and provides Reading Buddies for some of the school-age children, the program itself and other partners provide preschool education and homework tutors for children in grades kindergarten through eighth. Parents receive support in navigating the school system and being advocates for their children. Instruction for adults includes GED preparation, English as a Second Language, and computer skills. The other key partners include Boulder Valley School District’s Office of Student Success, Title I, University-Hill, Pioneer, Casey, Emerald Elementary, Head Start, and the Colorado Preschool Program. The family literacy program is made possible by grants.

**Computer Lab**

The BoulderReads! computer lab is located in the Main Library and consists of three PC workstations with headphones, a printer, a scanner, and four configurable meeting tables. The lab includes a web-based resource for building reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, sight-word recognition, decoding, comprehension, and life-skills reading. In addition, the lab includes software to build basic computer literacy, such as Internet Explorer, and MS Office. The computer lab is made possible by grants from the Boulder Public Library Foundation, IBM, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the City of Boulder, as well as by donations.

**Books for Tutors and Students**

BoulderReads! maintains a collection of over 1,200 books for adult new readers and their tutors; this collection is housed primarily in the Main Library’s public collection and is used by many community members in
addition to our own tutors and students.

The collection includes fiction and nonfiction for adult new readers—books written on topics of interest to adults but written at easier reading levels. The genres represented in this collection include romance, sports, mystery, classics, short stories, science fiction, and adventure. Nonfiction materials for adult new readers include biographies as well as texts on managing money, supporting a child's education, health information, getting a job, and many other reading-related life skills.

Materials for tutors include workbook series to use in teaching basic skills and life skills, as well as general references on how to teach comprehension, spelling, decoding, sight-word recognition, grammar, and many other skills.

GED Classes and GED Exam Site
BoulderReads! partners with the Boulder Valley Family Literacy Program and the Colorado Department of Education to provide a nonthreatening, welcoming location for adults in Boulder to study for and take the GED exam. The Boulder Valley Family Literacy Program sends one of its teachers to the BoulderReads! computer lab twice a week, where she conducts a GED class that is now attended by a number of BoulderReads! students, as well as several people who are new to the library’s educational programs. In addition, twice a month the BoulderReads! computer lab is the site of a GED exam night, giving local adults an alternative to going to Longmont or Westminster to take the GED.

Book Discussion Groups
BoulderReads! hosts book discussion groups for students and their tutors several times each year. In preparation for the groups, BoulderReads! considers titles recommended by students and tutors, orders multiple copies of one of those titles, and distributes them to tutors and students interested in participating. Several months later, possible topic questions are shared with tutors and students, and then a discussion is held.

Participating in a book discussion group is very much a “reader” thing to do, and students feel very proud to be a part of one; furthermore, these provide a great opportunity for building critical thinking skills, as students realize that other people have different interpretations about various aspects of the book. Finally, students gain confidence in themselves as critics and readers as they share their opinions with each other. These provide a great social opportunity for students to meet each other, support each other, and celebrate each other's progress.
A family of loons once lived along a big, beautiful lake in Maine.

There was a girl named Maggie. She was 8 years old and lived down the road from the witch. Maggie had a problem with taking other people’s things and the witch knew that.

The Reading Buddies program is made possible through a grant from the Boulder Library Foundation, as well as in-kind contributions from the University of Colorado and its students.
Picturing Writing Workshops
Conducted by BoulderReads! for female inmates at the Boulder County Jail

I bolt down from the sky and touch the tips of the waves.
The sky is full.
The storm is raging.
I am lightning.
Karen

As rain filters down
A cleansing flood
A promise of new
Tears from God
To show His love
Rain down on us
From heaven above
Kristi

Searing bright
As it breaks the night
Defiant beams
Disrupting dreams.
Clouds a fright
Hiding the calm moonlight.
Nikki

These poems were written and illustrated by women inmates participating in classes offered by BoulderReads! at the Boulder County Jail.

The workshops are made possible through grants from Colorado Relay, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, the Community Foundation Lotus Fund, and the Boulder County Jail.
Picturing Writing Workshops
Conducted by BoulderReads! for male inmates at the Boulder County Jail

I am electrifying.
I am striking and destructive.
I am a fire starter.
I roll with thunder.
I am lightning.
Arnold

You travel powerfully.
You carry destruction.
You lift forcefully.
You relocate randomly.
You create new vibrant life.
Brian

It is snowing in my bright city.
The skyline is glowing even more
Than the stars.
I love where I live,
The looks are like an exquisite model,
My state is beautiful Colorado.
Gilbert

These poems were written and illustrated by male inmates participating in classes offered by BoulderReads! at the Boulder County Jail.

The workshops are made possible through grants from Colorado Relay, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, the Community Foundation Lotus Fund, and the Boulder County Jail.