



DISCOVERIES

MAGAZINE

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BoulderReads Programs  
Theme: Your Journey

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# **BOULDER** **READS** **LITERACY FOR ALL**

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Our mission is to support children and adults through high quality literacy programs for greater opportunities in school and life.

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# Dedication to Shelley Sullivan

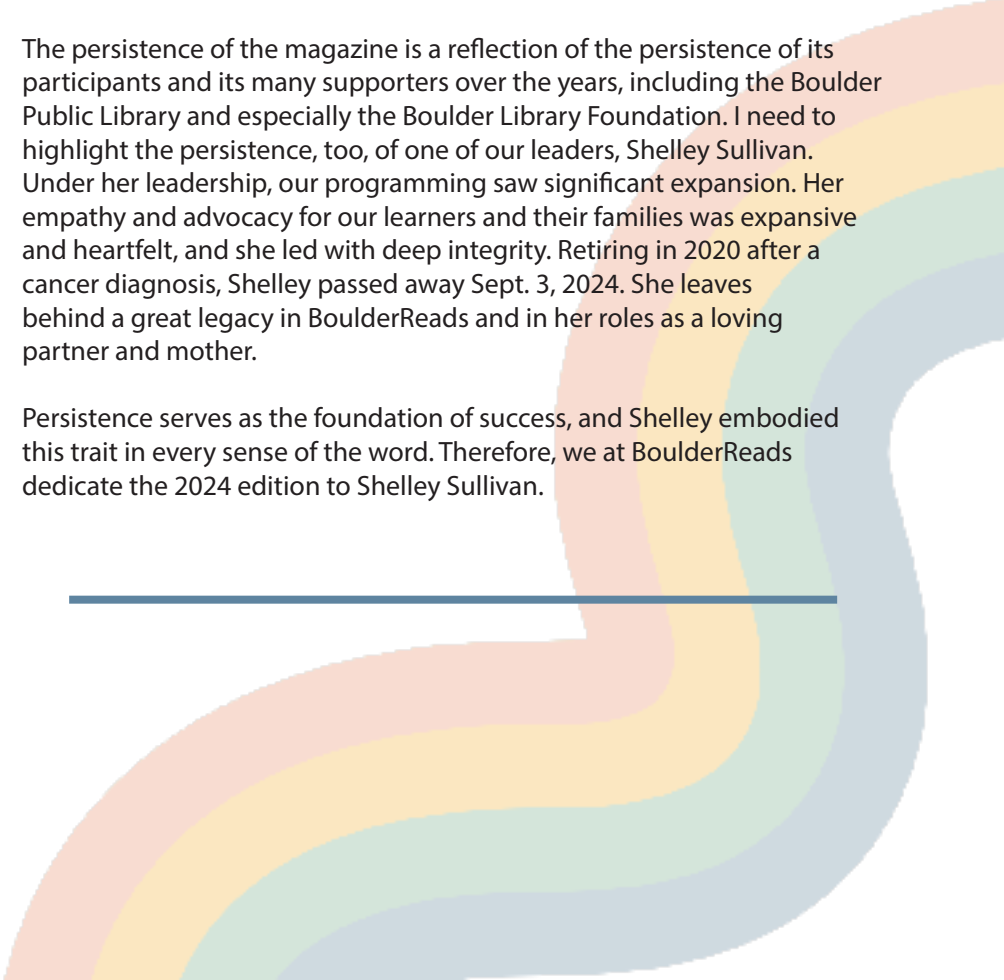
by Karen Bowen

The BoulderReads Discoveries magazine dates back to the early 1990's, when the founder decided to celebrate the accomplishments of our learners by collecting their writing in a booklet. Since then, we've released an issue every year.

The persistence of the magazine is a reflection of the persistence of its participants and its many supporters over the years, including the Boulder Public Library and especially the Boulder Library Foundation. I need to highlight the persistence, too, of one of our leaders, Shelley Sullivan. Under her leadership, our programming saw significant expansion. Her empathy and advocacy for our learners and their families was expansive and heartfelt, and she led with deep integrity. Retiring in 2020 after a cancer diagnosis, Shelley passed away Sept. 3, 2024. She leaves behind a great legacy in BoulderReads and in her roles as a loving partner and mother.

Persistence serves as the foundation of success, and Shelley embodied this trait in every sense of the word. Therefore, we at BoulderReads dedicate the 2024 edition to Shelley Sullivan.

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# BoulderReads Team

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**Kate Kelsh**  
Literacy & Outreach Manager



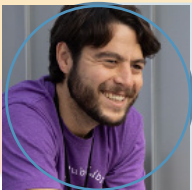
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**Maryssa O'Dell**  
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**Joey Graffagnino**  
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Program Coordinator



**Christine Burke**  
Volunteer Program Coordinator

# Introduction

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Since BoulderReads was founded by the Boulder Public Library nearly 40 years ago, 2024 marks perhaps the most transformative period in the program's history. Periods of transition bring reflection, restructuring, change and new opportunities.

This year, we've celebrated many milestones: moving to the beautiful new NoBo Library location, expanding the literacy and outreach team, introducing a citizenship class, increasing participation post-COVID-19, and starting new community-based programs. At the same time, we're looking to the future, planning new literacy initiatives to continue serving the needs of our community in 2025 and beyond. We've even redesigned our magazine, Discoveries, now featuring stories from participants across all programs including our incredible volunteers.

The theme of this year's Discoveries issue is "Your Journey" and as you read these moving and personal stories you will notice that they are about transitions. Our writers share their experiences transitioning from one community to a new one, about what it means to them to become American citizens and in some cases what it's like to have dual citizenship and identity. They tell us about their challenges and the rewards of learning a new skill or subject, and how it has changed their life for the better. All the stories share something in common: that each writer's transition leads to a new, more confident version of themselves and new opportunities.

My deep thanks to everyone who shared their stories and to our volunteers and staff for your dedication to BoulderReads' literacy mission!

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# High School Equivalency

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## Programs to earn your high school diploma

### Career Online High School

This is an accredited high school diploma and career certificate program offered free of charge by Boulder Public Library in partnership with the Boulder Library Foundation. Courses are 100% online and participants have up to 18 months to complete the program.

### High School Equivalency (HSE) Test Preparation Classes in English

Study with an experienced instructor in a small group setting. The library offers in-person HSE/GED preparation classes, providing all learning materials needed at no cost. This class prepares you for the 4 subject tests: Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science.

### Obtén tu Certificado de Equivalencia de HighSchool en Español

¡Ven y prepárate para tomar el examen HiSET en español gratis! Se ofrecerán de 12 a 16 sesiones presenciales para cada asignatura. Materiales de estudio incluidos. Los participantes también serán guiados a través del proceso oficial para realizar el examen.

## Aprendizajes compartido

Manuela Longoria

High School Equivalency Graduate

It's been ten years since I wanted to study to earn my GED. I started with Boulder Reads in 2014. I stayed in that program for 3 years until I had to drop off because I was pregnant, and also because I found it very difficult to learn all subjects for a single exam, and in English, which is not my first language, and didn't feel fully confident.



Five years later, I wanted to reach my goal and start again. I heard that Boulder Reads was offering the class in Spanish. It took 2 years to finally graduate, the difference this time was studying each subject separately and taking the exam for that subject before moving to the next one was better, and also the classes were in Spanish.

My teacher Adriana Paola explained everything in great detail. She inspired me and gave me the confidence to ask questions. I was very curious and I asked a lot of questions. In these 2 years, I have learned so many things that sometimes I ask myself, why have I waited so long to study? Math is not as hard as many people think it is, science is very complicated, but there is so much to learn and more to discover in the future. I learn to read and write using periods and commas, and how to capitalize, and use accents. I also learned things about history and economy, I learned things about daily life too, I learned that a single kind greeting tells about your values, and I learned many other things.

Now I know that the key I used to reach my goal was "I will never give up" If I had given up on my first exam I would not have graduated. Another thing that I liked was, that the person who gave the test was very friendly and he inspired me to have confidence all of the times that I went to the test center to take my test.



I would like to encourage all the people who want to study to follow their goals and not get discouraged until the goal is achieved. Everything is possible. I want to Thank Boulder Reads for everything they do for us, and for creating this space to learn. I want to thank my teacher Adriana Paola for teaching me a little of what she knows and for her valuable time with us. Also thanks to my husband Antonio, my children Silvia, Antonio, and Alma for their understanding and patience. I want to dedicate this achievement to my parents, my mom Silvia, and my father Erasmo Longoria, who is in heaven.

## Congratulations

Adriana Paola Palacios Luna  
High School Equivalency Instructor

I met Manuela through the HiSET classes. I am impressed with her perseverance and tenacity. Every week she came to our class without fail. On the screen, I could see from time to time her little daughter, who would peek out to tell her mother that she was tired and sleepy. Manuela patiently asked her to wait a little, that the class was almost over, and she continued participating actively, asking questions, and making inferences with the new information she gained. I feel very proud of Manuela's achievements, and it is an honor to be her teacher. She is a clear example of how can we achieve our goals with will and the appropriate resources and services. I celebrate and recognize all of Manuela's efforts, and it is a pleasure to see how she has become an inspiration for her classmates, as an example that perseverance brings good results. And as she says, we must not give up. Congratulations Manuela!!!

With admiration and gratitude,

Adriana Paola Palacios Luna,  
Study Companion

# Citizenship Classes



Get the help you need to become a Citizen of the United States of America

This class prepares those who want to become a U.S. citizen to understand the process and the interview needed. We review the USCIS forms, study the 100 questions, and practice interview questions. We also practice the English skills necessary to become a citizen. All nationalities and languages are welcome.



# Address to Newly Naturalized Citizens

Vladimir Pereskoko

Conversations in English Participant

It is my honor to share this special day with every one of you. Mine was July 18, 2012. That's when my wife, Maria, and I took the oath of allegiance. The fall of the same year, we took our daughters, Liza and Sasha, on a tour of the White House and the Capitol. An experience like this is unheard of in many other parts of the world!

Anita Stuehler, longtime friend, asked me to speak in front of you, and my initial reaction was, "Surely there is someone with better qualifications. I am not anything special, am I?" She convinced me that I was. I get this sort of encouragement from people around me all the time, don't you? People encourage, support friends, support neighbors, support strangers.

My family has lived here almost 22 years. America has been nothing short of welcoming. Our girls went to public and charter schools, then to colleges. We all made friends that are dear to us. I have a job that I love doing. My wife, Maria, runs her own business – a fact I am proud and a bit jealous of. I feel like America has a very strong foundation to build my future and family upon, to grow and develop, to be productive, and simply be happy.

The last major US elections had a record turnout of about 66.8%, 87% in Colorado. I know this IS the real number. And I like this 66.8% number much better than nearly 100%. Many of you, I am sure, know what I mean. America is no place for despair, no place for eternal cynicism. This is the place for hope.

But I am sure you don't need any convincing from me. You already KNOW that. That's why you are here. Thirty of you today are from 18 different countries on 4 continents. You are here to contribute, here to build, here to add your unique flavor to the American melting pot, here to be the masters of your own destiny, here to live and let live like generations of Americans before you and me.

I sincerely wish you the very best in this country of yours. And I hope one day we will see some of you here in front of the new wave of citizens, sharing your own wonderful story!

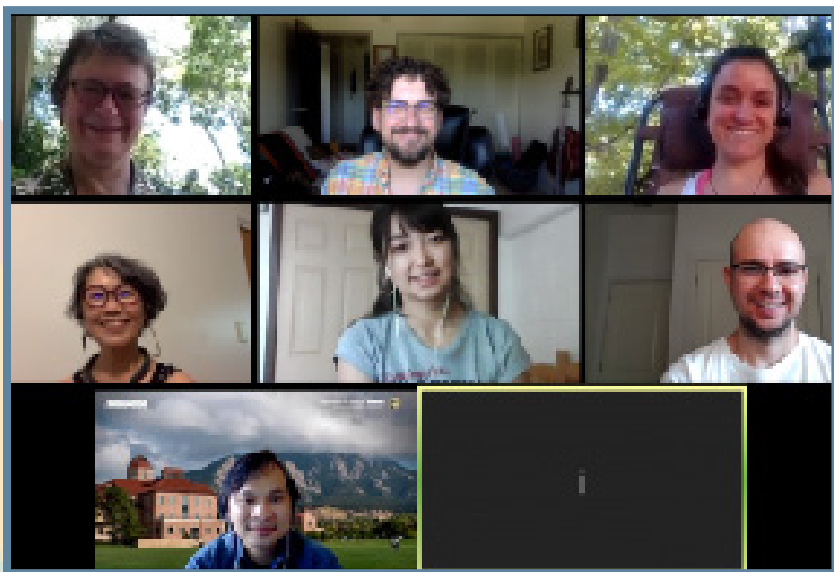
Congratulations once more and thank you for your attention!

# Conversations in English



## Practice listening and speaking in English

Conversations in English (CIE) groups at Boulder Public Library provide English learners with opportunities to practice their speaking and listening skills in a friendly and informal drop-in environment.



# My Story

Afroz Arefi

Conversations in English Participant

Like every human, every device has its own story. The story of my cellphone stand started from the day I went to Estes Park, Colorado, with my friends. We visited there at the end of September 2023. It has a unique, beautiful nature that is full of energy and peace.

We visited some art shops, including paintings and pottery. I saw some cellphone stands that were made of pottery. It impressed me. I said to myself, "One day I'll make it," but I didn't know pottery!!! About 6 months

ago, I found a pottery workshop with a nice skilled teacher. I showed her the picture of that stand, but she believed that it was impossible because it was made with a special clay that has more flexibility, and this clay was not available there.

However, that journey provoked me to learn pottery! I started to make some things, and I have a lot of pottery!

One day my teacher, who saw my enthusiasm, suggested that I make that cellphone stand with ordinary clay. At first, it was challenging. She helped me. We continued and shaped the clay. We put it in a kiln at a high temperature. We worried about cracking on it. But fortunately, everything was ok. We did it! We succeeded!!!

It makes sounds louder and clearer because of some physics rules. Nowadays, when I use it, it reminds me of beautiful Colorado and shows me that everything is possible if you really want it!!



# Warm Feelings

Houman Ghodsirasi

Conversations in English Participant

It was summer when we set foot on the path of friendship, we passed through unripe apples, Bear Creek and playful squirrels and reached delicious apples and colorful autumn. We walked softly on the colors and entered the colorful world of the Meadows library and met friends of different colors and nationalities.

The snow came and whiteness covered the ground, the snow removed the colors. We left our footprints on the white snow along the frozen river. We were walking on the colorless to reach the kind friends. We began walking from the house to the library in green and colorful colors and finished it with white. The Meadows Library always has a colorful memory for us with kind and lovely friends.



## In a Snowstorm

Geneviève Battarel

### Conversations in English Participant

It was in April 2019. We were in Louisville at our daughter's place. We decided to rent a car in Boulder to visit the Black Canyon. The car rental company rented us a car without snow equipment because it was April and spring was coming. We spent the night in Montrose. The trees were in bloom. We ate on a terrace; we enjoyed the spring.

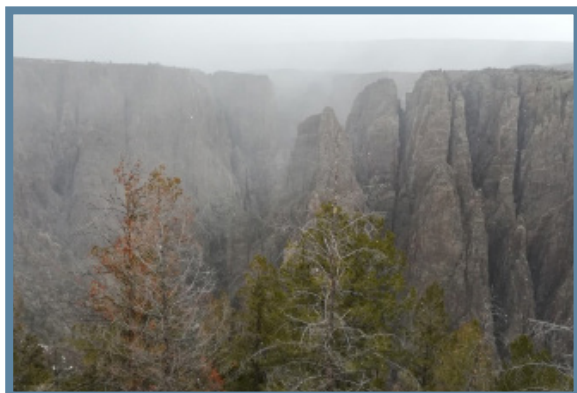
Early the next morning, we went to the Black Canyon. Little by little when we went to the east, the sky became cloudy. Nobody was at the park entrance, and there were only two cars in the parking lot of the Black Canyon. The people at the Visitor Center told us to leave quickly because "the blizzard arrives," especially because we had no snow equipment. Just a minute to take some pictures and we went back to the valley.

At that moment, our daughter called to tell us that the Denver Airport was closed because of a snowstorm, and it may last a few days. She begged us to come back; she was waiting for us with concern.

But from Gunnison to Louisville, we had to cross three passes at 3500 m. Monarch Pass was the most difficult to pass. But thank God a snowplow arrived, and we drove behind it.

What do we feel when we are in such conditions? We dream of our family's home which is waiting for us. We dream of a warm soup and a meal because we cannot stop to eat something. But we had to move on, to move on.

Just before nightfall we arrived in Louisville. What a beautiful and memorable evening we spent with our family! Two days later, the snow stopped falling, and we could enjoy blue sky and sunshine again. I love Colorado.



# My Journey

Neeti Sonth

Conversations in English Participant

7 years ago, I took a flight from India,  
to the United States of America.  
"It's dangerous! Stay back!"; my relatives warned.  
Yet there I went to study, thinking myself doomed!  
Nervous to travel so far,  
To a land of wonder, like a star.  
Away from home, in solitude,  
Scared and lost, in the crowd.  
Like an outcast I felt,  
Though soon this, too, I surpassed.  
I coalesced, grew fond of school, and all was fine,  
Until I graduated, and it was time to shine.  
In industry I worked,  
Fearing responsibility, feeling irked.  
Not long after, I grew accustomed to it,  
And gave my best, a fire was lit!  
Then soon I stagnated,  
Should I go?' I asked!  
Staying back, my haven, I basked,  
But I realized then, I had to move on!  
Finally resigned, to venture to a new place,  
The new hat, the new challenges, I embraced.  
And with the bucks and the does,  
I had the fun, they became my amigos.  
The seasons turned, the years passed,  
To return to school I yearned, I wanted more.  
So I called it quits,  
I was terrified every bit  
It's been a year since,  
And I'm now convinced.  
This is where I belong,  
I've wanted to do this all along.  
Yet something lacked,  
It was my English, I recognized.  
So I joined Conversations in English,  
Working with awesome facilitators is such bliss!  
Met great and amazing people,  
And shared stories with other pupils.



# Try and Try Again

Suan Schnell  
Conversations in English  
Facilitator



The 2 of them were all a-twitter.  
What has happened, oh, dear.  
Where O where can my babies be?

I looked and looked again, and they are not there! I said they are no longer there. Where could my little ones have gone? I saw a flash of blue as I came in. Before I could see what the blue streak was, I knew there was trouble. My legs went all soft and I could barely make it to the edge of the nest.

Steady, dear, let's not get all anxious before I establish some facts. Looking around, he found one small blue feather and yes, that rascal of a blue jay had been up to his thieving habits. Yes, he got my dear little ones and did not leave any other trace. He must have eaten them all. I thought we were safe. The owner of the house had built a wire baffle and only allowed a small entrance to our nest. How, oh how did that rascal squirm through to get at our little ones? Let me go and comfort Jenny. Lordy help me find the right words.

Jenny, sweet Jenny, we will try again. You are so young and beautiful, and we have plenty of time. It is only May. Our next brood will be ready ere mid-June arrives, and we can give them flying lessons while it is balmy warm.

Sobbing, Jenny tried to be brave, and she hopped into the nest and settled in all ready to lay her second batch. He hopped around and sat on the edge of the perch and tried to be brave, even as his heart sank lower than it had ever been before. Looking around, he saw that they did have a perfect location. The water fountain was close by, and the trees and shrubs were full of berries, and on top of everything, the owner had thoughtfully hung a bird feeder. He filled it full, and beside it was a tray of suet, Jenny's favorite. I know God takes care of the sparrows, and he will take care of us too. This time, we will have 5 eggs and 5 babies to teach to fly, and I will do all in my power to see that Jenny smiles her sweet smile and, in her joy, will forget this sorrow of loss by blue jay. He hopped up to the nest and, snuggling in with Jenny, they made sweet music together.

# Tutoring One-on-One



## Reading and writing for career and personal advancement

This program is for adults seeking to improve their literacy skills to achieve personal goals related to post-secondary education, career advancement, and family literacy engagement.

Tutors meet with learners in person and/or online for learning sessions that fit their schedule and meet their literacy needs.



## From the Hustle of Caracas to the Charm of North Houston: A Venezuelan's First Year in Texas

Carmen Birmingham, Learner  
Lynn Weatherwax, Tutor

"Comparison is a thief of joy"  
- Theodore Roosevelt

Stepping off the plane in Houston, Texas, felt like stepping into a different world. My vibrant Caracas

had pulsated with the rhythm of Latin music, the aroma of toasted corn arepas, and the warmth of familiar faces. North Houston, on the other hand, whispered with the rustling of oak leaves, the scent of barbecue, and the friendly drawl of "Howdy!" replacing the rapid-fire Spanish greetings of my homeland. This was the start of a year that unfolded like a kaleidoscope of new experiences, challenges, and unexpected joys.



Adjusting to the slower pace and the cultural differences was a hurdle at first. I missed the noisy laughter echoing through the streets and the familiar cadence of Spanish jokes. However, amidst the differences, I discovered a warmth and hospitality that transcended cultural boundaries. The seemingly mundane moments of sharing a plate of barbecue at a potluck, dancing to country music, and learning to pronounce "y'all" without cracking a smile became bridges between my two worlds. I also found pockets of my Caracas in the vibrant Hispanic communities where Latin music played and arepas sizzled on grills. I began to appreciate the quiet charm of small-town life and the sense of community that bound people together.

Navigating the complexities of a new family, a new language, and immigration paperwork was a constant challenge. The longing for family and friends back home weighed heavily at times. It was during these moments that I discovered a newfound strength within myself, a resilience I never knew I possessed. My Venezuelan resourcefulness, the unwavering support of loved ones and new friends, and my determination to build a new life all fueled my spirit.

This experience was not just about adapting to a new place and my new family; it was about adapting to a new version of myself. I was no longer just a Venezuelan; I became a Venezuelan-Texan, a hyphenated identity that embodied the lessons learned, the bridges built, and the strength discovered in this first year abroad.

## My Future

David Allshouse, Learner  
Lindsey Anderson, Tutor

Someday, when I get older and it's time to retire, I want to make sure I have enough money to live happily for the rest of my life and do what I like to do. I want to keep good friends like Lindsey, Meghan, and other people I know. I want to travel more to see different things I have not seen before. I would like to see what my friends do in the future, too.

I want to go on trips and have fun with my family and friends, but I don't know where I want to go yet. One thing that will help me save money while traveling is not buying things—I just like to look around at everything and walk around the city. I also want to keep hearing about fun places my friends go. I will still be friends with my tutor Lindsey, and her girlfriend Meghan. Lindsey and I have worked together for 16 years—we will be a BoulderReads team forever!

Someday I would like to find a friend like my late girlfriend Teri. Teri passed away in the King's Sooper's shooting. Part of my journey will be remembering her and all the fun we had. Lindsey and I like to say Teri was Lindsey's good luck charm in our weekly Scrabble games. Another good memory is when Teri and I brought in a huge chocolate cupcake for Lindsey's birthday. Sometimes Teri and I would just walk around together.

Walking around Boulder is another important part of my future, because it will help me stay healthy. In the future, I will have to exercise more and keep walking. I walk Pearl Street a lot—I go from 15th Street to 12th, where the Boulder Bookstore is, and back. I want to ask my friends to walk with me.

I am excited about what the rest of my journey will be. I don't know what the rest of my future holds, but I know it will be fun!!



# A Walk with Frank

Mina Ahanin, Learner

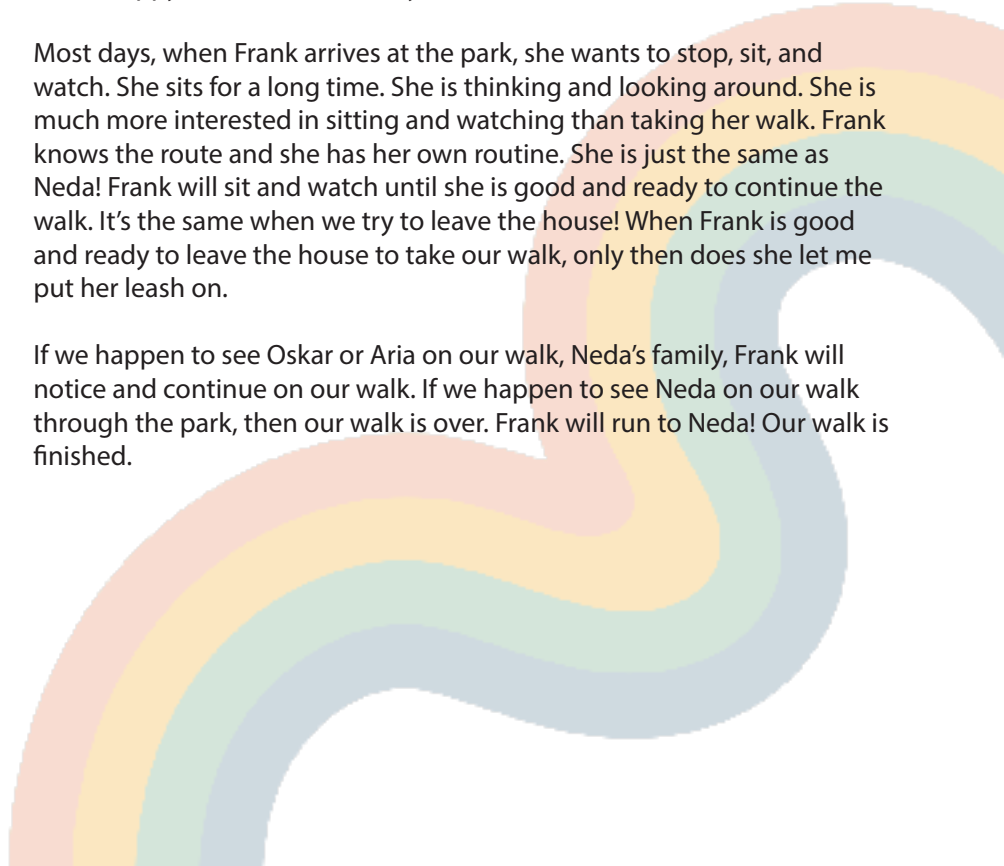
Anne Walker, Tutor

I usually get ready for a walk with Frank about noon. It is a beautiful, sunny, blue sky autumn afternoon. I grab my green sweater, my house keys, my iPhone, and my green fanny pack. I walk a short five minutes to my daughter, Neda's house to pick up Frank. Frank is Neda's dog. She is a sweet and gentle, and very lazy, older, beige, female pug. She is always looking for food; especially bacon. That's the big prize! There can never be enough food for Frank. There are a few foods, however, that Frank will not eat: one is lettuce.

Frank loves to take a walk. She loves to smell every inch of grass in the park. Frank is very curious. She looks around the park for activity. She is watching for movement, children, birds, and other dogs. When people approach Frank and me with their dogs, Frank is very friendly and relaxed. She is happy to meet them. Everyone knows me because of Frank.

Most days, when Frank arrives at the park, she wants to stop, sit, and watch. She sits for a long time. She is thinking and looking around. She is much more interested in sitting and watching than taking her walk. Frank knows the route and she has her own routine. She is just the same as Neda! Frank will sit and watch until she is good and ready to continue the walk. It's the same when we try to leave the house! When Frank is good and ready to leave the house to take our walk, only then does she let me put her leash on.

If we happen to see Oskar or Aria on our walk, Neda's family, Frank will notice and continue on our walk. If we happen to see Neda on our walk through the park, then our walk is over. Frank will run to Neda! Our walk is finished.



## BoulderReads Changes Lives

Franklin Escobar, Learner  
Marcia Kahn, Tutor

I have been part of the BoulderReads program, which hasn't been the easiest thing for me, but it has been worth it because I feel like all the learners and tutors put in so much time and effort to make it possible.

I became a learner because I wanted to understand and communicate better with other people, and here I am 9 years later, proud of who I have become because of BoulderReads. It's amazing to see how this program has changed my life in such a positive way.



As I look back, I realize I have accomplished many things in both my personal and professional life.

I didn't see results from one day to another and that frustrated me in the beginning. With the help of my tutor, Marcia Kahn, and my own dedication, I can now see all the progress and recognition I have received from the library and the community.

Last year I realized all the impacts this program had made in my life. Chris Barge (Executive Director of the Library Foundation) asked me to give a speech at their annual Gala. I was very insecure about it because I had never spoken in front of a large group of people. I decided to do it, and it was an amazing experience that gave me a lot of confidence and made me feel proud.

This program continues to bring me new challenges and unexpected recognition, and I forever will be very grateful for it.

I can't wait for the new opportunities that are coming my way because of BoulderReads.

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# The Power of Language

Marcia Kahn, Tutor

My journey with BoulderReads began about twelve years ago with a training program facilitated by Karen Bowen, the director. During these sessions I not only learned countless techniques for teaching English language learners but also received many tools and resources for lesson planning and execution. I still consult these same materials and receive updated versions that are invaluable from the Boulder Reads staff.

I am constantly amazed and energized by the way that the power of language impacts my learner. His ever-increasing ability to navigate all the challenges of everyday life such as reading traffic signs and filling out countless forms initially became easier and then became second nature. But the real bonus lies in his ability to communicate with others in writing and verbally. So many activities that center around a meaningful life increase when the knowledge and power of words is part of our day-to-day experience.

It has been an unforgettable pleasure for my learner and myself to be connected with the Boulder Library community at large and BoulderReads in particular. There is a pride and joy associated with such activities as gathering for a holiday potluck where foods that reflect the various countries of our learners are enjoyed or a celebration that recognizes the accomplishments of learners. The general pleasure of sharing knowledge permeates the culture of BoulderReads and gives the tutors and learners alike a feeling of belonging and contributing to this vital part of our community.



## About Me

Karime Escobar, Learner  
Chris Altier, Tutor

My name is Karime Escobar. I am from Colombia, and I have been living in the US since November of 2022, less than two years. When I was living in my country, I took some English classes, but nothing serious and I had never practiced it.

It was really difficult for me to communicate in English because I did not understand anything in English two years ago, but I am so happy because the last month I took my first technical course in English, and I understood it. That course was about processing GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) data using a NASA software it called GipsyX. The course

was in Portugal, but the instructors were from US. In the course there were people from many different countries, and I had to deal with many accents to communicate in English. Also, I met many people, and I have a new friend from Italy.

I was so scared to take that course, and I got it and I feel so proud of myself because I did not think that I could do it.





## Miss Roghani

Tayebeh Firuzkuhi, Learner  
Lynn Weatherwax, Tutor

When I was in preschool, one of my uncles (maternal) was director of education in my hometown. He was a responsible person and a very hard worker. He attempted to improve education for people, especially youth. He was very famous and very honorable. Everybody in our city knew him and respected him as a patron. My family was very proud of him.



In that period of time, in first grade, I had a nice teacher. Her name was Miss Roghani. She had a bright face, light brown hair and honey-colored eyes. She always wore very pretty clothes. We had to wear a smoky-colored school uniform with a white belt and white collar. We had to be well groomed. Every morning when we were entering the class she said “welcome” to all of us with a beautiful smile.

I was an obstinate girl at that age. Sometimes in the morning when I was preparing to go to school, I got in a bad mood and became petulant. Because of that, I didn’t want to do regular functions. I had medium length hair. I didn’t comb my hair and didn’t allow anyone else to comb my hair. I told my mother, “I don’t want to comb my hair because I want you and my family, especially my uncle, to be ashamed of my appearance in school!” My mother and my older sister who looked after me didn’t force me, they just subtly placed a comb into my school bag.

When I arrived at class, Miss Roghani told me, “I think you forgot to make your hair in good shape, didn’t you?” Then she took the comb from my bag and patiently started combing my hair.

I have never forgotten her kindness for the rest of my life. On my life’s journey, every time I remember her, I smile to myself. I imagine that her fresh face, full of happiness, is next to me just as it was at that time. Her affection has been flowing through me my entire life.

# My BoulderReads English Tutoring Journey

Sandra Marin, Learner

Celeste Da Silva Cunha, Tutor

Boulder Reads matched me with a tutor, and her name is Celeste. I started my first English tutoring lesson on January 31, 2024, at the Main library in Boulder.

We discussed my goals for the first lesson, which was learning conversational and social English. During this time, between January and July I read two books. The first book was *The Pelican Brief*, and the second was *A Journey of Letters*.

We also practiced conversational English by discussing books and magazines that were interesting. These magazines had interesting topics on everyday life. She also introduced me to social dialogue. We spoke about the weather, food, exercise, travel, politics and prices of houses in Boulder.

One lesson included hiking and walking at Wonderland Lake to increase social communication and conversation. This included journaling about my daily walks with my dog.

We spent time talking about what activities I enjoy, and I told her cooking brings me joy. My favorite recipes are Colombian Lentil Soup, Spicy Chicken Masala US Style, and Colombian Style Shrimp Ceviche.

Most lessons were taken from *Intermediate Word Strategies*, which helps students to build a strong vocabulary. My lessons were enjoyable because we could talk about everything. I felt relaxed and comfortable enough to ask questions.

I now feel more confident speaking social English, and my vocabulary has increased. My plan is to continue with English lessons at Intercambio Boulder and social English tutoring with Boulder Reads.

## My Journey

Paty Molina, Learner  
Jane Rich, Tutor

This Discoveries magazine's focus is "Share Your Journey," and I know that journey can mean a lot of things. I travel often to Mexico and have found that one of my strengths is actively listening to people during my travel. I recently took a long bus trip from Colorado to Mexico to visit my family, and the story of the person who sat next to me had a big impact on me.



When I got on the bus, I sat by the window. A middle-aged man got on the bus and told me that I was in his seat but that I could stay in it. We talked the whole trip to Mexico. He mentioned that his lower back hurt because he had been in a work-related accident that put him in a wheelchair for three years. He was living in Denver at the time but, after his accident, he moved to Mexico because he learned that he now has stomach cancer. He changed his diet and started to read books about the meaning of life.

His story impacted me because he was so positive despite his health challenges. He told me that he has accepted his sickness and has hope that he will heal. He is undergoing chemo and taking health remedies. He used to have fainting spells but doesn't anymore. He attributes his better health to his faith in God, his diet and to hope. In looking at him, he didn't look sick at all.

He also told me that his mother used to tell him, "Son, there are 24 hours in the day: 8 hours for working, 8 hours for sleeping, and 8 hours for family. I have been thinking about this and my mother's advice, "If you live quickly, you end quickly."

I am also a person of faith and hope. I believe that these things can go a long way to healing your body. It also helps you achieve your dreams and goals. Sometimes when I feel sad or hopeless, I remember his story and try to be more positive like him. I say to myself, "Everything will be OK."

## My Life in Thailand: A Snapshot

Kim Torrone, Learner

Yvonne Siu-Runyan, Tutor

Hi, my name is Kim Sin Obchune Torrone. My maiden name is a flower that grows in Thailand. Torrone is my married name and means candy.

I grew up in Lopburi, Thailand. Life was hard; I worked every day from ages 10 to 16 until I married. I came from a large family; there were 12 children, 2 did not survive. Because my family was not rich, we didn't have a lot of money to hire people, so we had to do all the chores ourselves. But even though we were not rich, my family lived a good and modest life.



### Morning Chores

Early in the morning, I would build an open fire. Then I would haul water so that members of my family could use the water throughout the day and into the night and cook rice for the day. While the rice was cooking, I would either boil or fry the duck eggs. Besides cooking the duck eggs, I would steam bamboo shoots to eat with rice and duck eggs. Yes, we ate rice, duck eggs, and bamboo shoots daily; they are nutritious and delicious to eat.

### Going to the Mountains to Collect Bamboo Shoots

Every week, my mother and I would go to the mountains to gather bamboo shoots to eat and to sell.

It took about an hour on a rickety old bus to get from our home to the mountains. Being on that rickety old bus was an adventurous ride.

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On that bus, we would bring huge bags that looked like potato sacks and load them up with the bamboo shoots we dug up. The bags were soaked in water to keep the bamboo shoots fresh so they could last for a whole month.

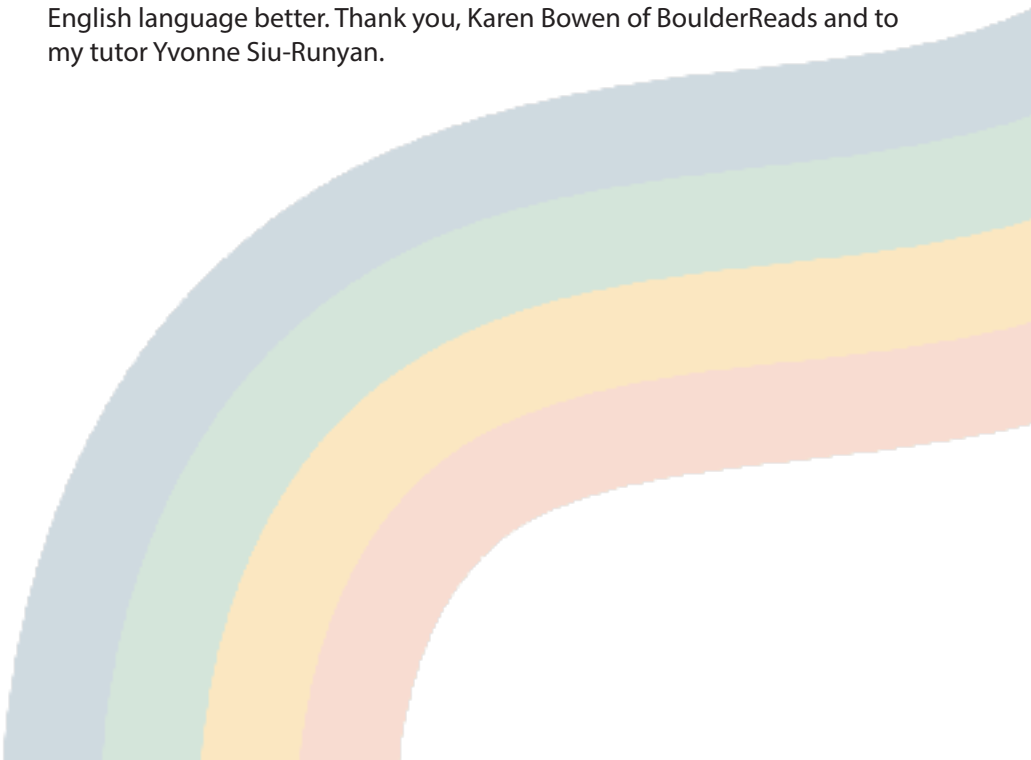
After we harvested the bamboo shoots, we would save some for the family to eat and then sell the rest to earn extra money.

Happy to HELP!

I truly liked helping my family. I was not the kind of young person who liked to play with other kids like my siblings did. I was pleased to do the chores—hauling water, building a fire, going to the mountains to dig up bamboo shoots, and going to the farm to get duck eggs for my family to eat and to sell. By the way, duck eggs are truly delicious to eat.

My mother and I worked hard every day; we worked hard so that our family could survive and live together in our modest home made of bamboo with no running water and no electricity.

P.S. I joined BoulderReads, because I want to learn and understand the English language better. Thank you, Karen Bowen of BoulderReads and to my tutor Yvonne Siu-Runyan.



# Reading Buddies



Helping kids build positive relationships with reading and writing

Children in grades 1-3 are matched with an adult volunteer or University of Colorado student for 10-12 sessions. Each week, Reading Buddies pairs spend 90 minutes playing games, reading books, and writing their own story while having fun and building confidence.



## Our Journey Through the Library

Raquel Doran, Mom of Sachi  
Reading Buddies Participant

I've been taking my son to the library's story times since he was few months old. We used to live about a mile from the main branch, so it was a nice exercise for me to walk there and back along the creek.

Then my little baby turned into a school age kid, and he started to get bored at the story times, so we stopped going as frequently to the library. We used to go a lot and spend at least half day there between the children's programs, making new friends and sometimes having lunch at the cafe. One day, talking to another story time mom who I haven't seen for a while, she mentioned that her daughter, who is the same age as my son, really enjoyed the one-on-one attention at Reading Buddies and suggested that I try it with my son. Well, he ended up enjoying it a lot too, so much that he asked to be enrolled a second time.

At the end of the first semester, he didn't end up reading his story to the audience, but in the second semester, he seemed definitively more confident. He worked on a more elaborate story and finally read it fluently to his peers and the public. His schoolteacher also complimented his writing skills development and gave us his academic reports where we could verify his improvements in comprehension and vocabulary, which were a little behind at the beginning of the year.

Personally, at the first Reading Buddies sessions I was a little nervous to drop my kid since I used to be physically close to him in all the previous library programs. As time passed, I got more used to and enjoyed having a small window where I could have some time for myself, check out a book, go to a nearby cafe or meet a friend.

I also feel safe when I see that there's a security worker stationed very close to where the kids have their programs, since the library is a public space and open to all kinds of different people.

Ultimately, I would like to mention that I have seen many immigrant moms like myself bringing their kids to the programs at the library. I have made some nice friends coming from distant parts of the world, and I feel like we found a common place where we are welcome and get some very needed help to educate our kids in a whole new country and many times in a whole different language.

# BOULDERREADS

LITERACY FOR ALL

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## BOULDER LIBRARY FOUNDATION

BoulderReads would like to thank the Boulder Library Foundation for its ongoing support.

[boulderlibraryfoundation.org](http://boulderlibraryfoundation.org)

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For information about any of our BoulderReads programs, including how to participate, email us at [boulderreads@boulderlibrary.org](mailto:boulderreads@boulderlibrary.org).  
or fill out our interest form at:  
[boulderlibrary.org/boulderreads/contact-us](http://boulderlibrary.org/boulderreads/contact-us)



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