



**American Immigration Law Foundation
Immigration Curriculum Center Lesson Plan**

**Immigration Stories
By Children, For Children**

Grade Level: Primary School (1st-3rd Grades)

Goal: The goal for primary school students is to utilize a variety of research sources to write their own immigration stories for other children, in order to foster understanding of present day immigrant experiences.

Objectives: The class will produce a book of stories on the theme of contemporary immigration.

Each student will:

- Research the topic through a variety of sources such as interviews, guest speakers, field trips, video, internet, books, etc.
- Choose their own genre in which to write (biography, autobiography, realistic fiction, journal/ diary, etc.)
- Write a story which incorporates what they learned about immigration using the writing process (prewriting, draft, editing, revising, publishing).

Materials:

Immigration themed books and text

Internet access

Community resources such as museums

Immigration related social services and advocacy groups

Guest speakers

Completed book (attached)

Procedure:

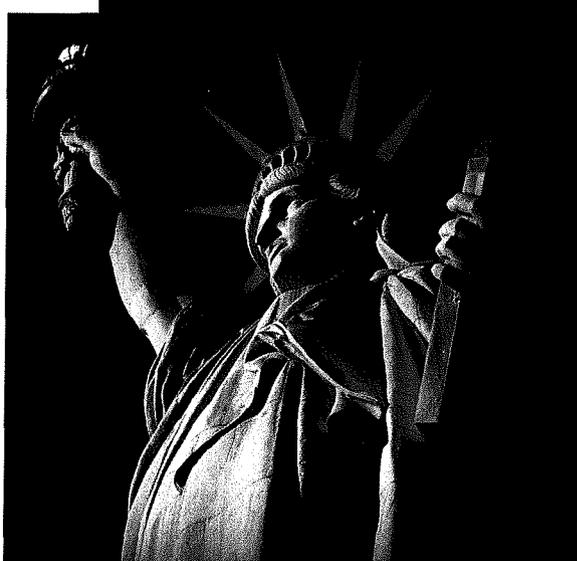
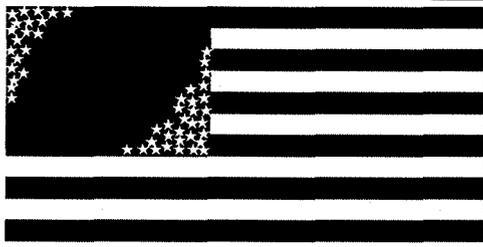
1. Introduce the project idea of writing immigration stories to the students and the rationale for the project. Explain that very few immigration stories are written by children and the importance of including the voices of young people as well as adults. Provide the students with multiple examples of immigration themed book, both fiction and nonfiction. Read these books aloud, promote them with "book talks," and find other ways to encourage students to read this literature.
2. Consider your resources and time. This project could last a few weeks or it could be extended to a full year study of immigration with the immigration stories project as the culminating finale. Plan several smaller writing projects which could be taught throughout the year to serve as stepping stones to a larger project of writing immigration stories, such as:
 - biographies of immigrants (either family members or immigrants who live in your community);
 - historical fiction, related to expansive periods of immigration in your community ;
 - compare and contrast writing, in which students find similarities and differences in their own lives with the lives of characters from immigration themed books.
3. Model writing through daily mini-lessons (writers' workshop model) and develop rubrics specific to the genre and writing techniques, in which you wish your students to develop skills as writers. Encourage students to use a reflective writing process (prewriting, drafts, peer editing, revising, conferencing, publishing, etc).
4. Depending on the resources in your community, plan ways for your students to engage in research by using a variety of sources. Many communities have historical museums that include exhibits that highlight periods of high immigration to your local. Focus on themes which can be continued to present day issues such as why immigrants moved from their homelands, why they came to your locality, how were they treated when they arrived, and what contributions they made toward building your community. In addition, in communities with high numbers of recent immigrants, social service agencies and advocacy groups could be brought into the classroom to educate students on issues facing immigrants today.
5. Think of immigration and migration broadly, and inclusively. Of course not everyone in the United States came here freely-many were captured, enslaved and brought by force. Include the stories of slaves as well and migrations that occurred within our borders, particularly the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North between the Civil War and World War II. In looking at the reasons why former slaves and their decedents left the South, and why they moved to places like Chicago, their reception and treatment after arriving in the North, and their significant contributions to their new homes, my students found illuminating similarities between African

American migrants and immigrants from Europe who moved to Chicago in the mid to late 1800s, and contemporary immigrants to the United States (both documented and so called, "illegal").

6. Start writing. Allow students to develop their own immigration stories creatively. After so much exposure to text, the "real" stories of actual immigrants, historical perspectives, and so on, the students will be motivated to show what they have learned by putting it down on paper in the form of stories. Once the stories have been refined, there are many options for publishing such as handmade books, typewritten stories, etc. One option is to collect all the stories from the class into one book, which is what I did with my students.
7. See [*United Voices, Divided States: Immigration Stories By Children, For Children*](#). My students were incredibly proud of their collective effort in the form of a book. They took great delight in sharing it with their families, and reading it to one another on the last days of school.

Assessment: Assess student stories to determine if they reflect themes and issues they learned about regarding immigration. Ask students to discuss and draw parallels between the experiences of various immigrant and migrant groups (historical) with particular attention to issues and experiences of immigrants in the contemporary national debate on immigration.

United Voices,
Divided **States**



**Immigration Stories
By Children, For Children**

United Voices, Divided States

Introduction

A year ago when I learned that my proposal, *"Immigration Stories: By Children, For Children,"* was accepted and funded by the American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF), I had no idea that the topic of immigration would explode in the form of a political volcano on the American landscape. Across the country this past spring, hundred and thousands of immigrants and their supporters marched for immigrant rights and poured through the streets like thick lava.

Chicago was the site of the first mass demonstration on March 10th, mostly in reaction to a bill (HR 4437) passed in the House of Representatives, which besides creating a 700 mile long multi-tiered fence along the Mexican-US border, would make so called "illegal" immigrants, (as well as people who help such people—clergy, social service agencies, schools) *felons*. The Chicago mass protest model quickly spread to other cities such as Los Angeles, Omaha, Dallas and Phoenix. A subsequent march in Chicago on May 1st was the largest march ever here with an estimated 400,000 to 500,000 marchers. It took me three and a half hours to completely walk the two mile route through the loop. It is against this backdrop that my class of 18 amazing and bright third grade writers - almost all of whom are the sons and

daughters of recent immigrants from all over the world, wrote the immigration stories in this collection.

This book is a product of a year-long course in the study of immigration with a particular focus on Chicago. Immigration was our overall integrated theme for the year, by which social studies was combined with arts, science, math and language arts. We began the school year by studying the life cycle and habitats of migrating monarch butterflies, a species impervious to proposed border fences between Mexico and the USA.

We learned about the first native people in the Chicago area and their encounters with traders such as Haitian-born Jean Baptiste Point du Sable. We studied and graphed the first big waves of European immigration in the mid to late 1800s through the study of four Chicago neighborhoods: The Bohemians in Pilsen, the Swedes in Andersonville, the Germans in Rogers Park, and the Irish in Bridgeport. We discovered that many of these immigrants left their homelands because of famine, war, religious intolerance. We learned that most came to Chicago for jobs during a period of rapid industrialization. We understood that the treatment of these immigrants was often harsh. Many faced forced assimilation, police brutality, and ghettoized neighborhoods, and found refuge in settlement houses. Finally we emphasized the contributions that immigrants made to our city. We took field trips to these neighborhoods as well as to the Jane Addams Hull House Museum.

We looked at the issue of forced migration in the form of slavery and then the Great Migration, which chronicled the movement of former slaves and their descendants from the south to northern cities including Chicago. We discovered grave similarities in the experiences of Black newcomers to the city by

again looking at the push and pull factors for migration, as well as reception, treatment and contributions to Chicago. Finally, the students looked at contemporary issues in immigration to Chicago and found many of the same themes emerge again. Parents and community members visited our classroom to share their own personal stories as immigrants.

Along the way the students produced several pieces of writing related to our study of immigration. They began the year by writing a biography in which they chose an adult family member to write about. Next they wrote historical fiction, writing from the perspective of an immigrant to Chicago in the 1800s. They wrote compare and contrast pieces, in which they chose a character from an immigration themed book and discussed their similarities and differences this character.

With the generous support of the AILF and the Rochelle Lee Fund (a Chicago-based supporter of classroom libraries), I was able to purchase over a hundred titles on the theme of immigration and migration for my classroom library. These books have inspired and informed my students over the course of the year. For us, these immigration books have become a distinct literature genre, like biographies or mysteries. I have read many of them aloud to my students over the year and many are well worn. Only one, however, is written by a child author; the rest are written by adults. This too has been part of the inspiration for this book of stories. My students also have stories to share. Even though this project was originally conceived as immigration stories by children, for children, it is our hope that children, teens, and adults will all enjoy and learn from them.

Some of the stories are autobiographical, while some are to be considered realistic fiction. Some are written in third person

narrative, while others are told in first person, either narrative or in a journal format. Although not purely an opinion piece, this book is not intended to show a so called "balanced" viewpoint of immigration debate between the immigrant rights camps and the "other side." The students share a perspective (similar to AILF) that immigration has had and continues to have an overwhelmingly positive influence on our country. Immigrants are not invaders and should not be "scapegoated" or blamed for our country's ills. It is our hope that the stories in this book, written from the perspective of children and focusing on our common humanity, will help to unite the divided perspectives on this topic in the United States.

Michael Tajchman
Third Grade Teacher
Passages Charter School
June, 2006

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Acknowledgements

We would like to wholeheartedly thank the American Immigration Law Foundation for supporting this project over the past year and for being a recognized educational leader on the topic of immigration. We would also like to thank the Rochelle Lee Fund for their support of classroom libraries and teacher professional development, including workshops on using literature to teach about immigration. Many thanks also to all the parents and family members for their support. In particular we would like to thank Gabriel's mother, Ms. Michaela Mills, for typing a number of the stories that appear in this book.

Passages Charter School

Asian Human Services(AHS) was established as a non-profit social service agency in 1978 to meet the critical health care and human service needs of Chicago's Asian immigrant and refugee population. Building on its solid foundation of providing social and educational services to this community, AHS opened a charter school in 2001, Passages Charter School, with a curriculum designed to meet the specific linguistic and social needs of immigrant families. Passages is a pre-k through fifth grade elementary school with a current enrollment of 229 students.

Passages is a full-service school offering comprehensive social support services and an educational environment built upon parental and community involvement. All students and their families have access to an extensive array of programs provided by AHS, from the AHS Family Health Center to programs in Mental Health, Community Health, Employment and Adult and Family Literacy.

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Tattoos in America

By Tayyaba Hanif

Dedication

This story is dedicated to my family that immigrated, just like the Hanif, Haseeb and Khan families.

I'm thinking about when I first found out that I was coming to America. It all started when my dad got a phone call. "Tayyaba pick up the phone," said my Papa.

I picked up the phone and gave it to him. "Jellde," he said. I went outside wondering who he was talking to. A few minutes later I went inside again. "Mamma?" I said.

"Kya," she questioned.

"Who is dad talking to?" I asked.

My mom didn't answer. At dinner I didn't say anything about the call, mostly because I was having my favorite dish, *salan and rotti*. Then my dad spoke up, "I'm going to America."

My mom and I gulped. "Kyoo," she asked.

"A man offered me a job at 7 Eleven." He said, "Soon you will come too."

"No, we will not." I said quickly.

"You will too." said my Pappa.

I ran to the top of the roof. It was warm outside and I was sad as a child knowing someone passed away. I heard my parents talking. "What is Tayyaba going to do without you," shouted my mom.

"Quiet. Tayyaba will hear," said pappa. "It will only be for a couple of years— I already know English,"

"Tayyaba will not go to the school in Chicago," yelled my mom.

"Yes she will!" argued my dad.

"We should let Tayyaba chose," they said.

"Tayyaba *eder au*," called my mom.

"*Kya*," I answered.

"Do you want to go to America?" she asked.

"Only if you come too," I replied

"*Ha*," she said.

"We will all go," said pappa.

"When?" I asked.

"In one week," he said.

"One week!" we shouted.

Before I knew it, seven days had passed. There was no time for anything.

"Pack your bags!" My mom yelled.

"We did it," my mom said, "*Ab so jow.*"

"*Uhto!*" I shouted.

"It's morning. It's morning." I shouted the next day.

I shouted so loud the baby started to cry.

"Where are our passports and tickets," my mom called.

"In my coat pocket," he said carrying the baby.

We left the house at 8:00 in the morning. I was excited as a new born baby's mother. We got on the plane. A few hours later we took off. I was scared as a mouse when we went high up. Night time was here. I couldn't sleep on the seats. My mom teased, "You can sleep on the floor."

"Okay," I said.

My sister woke up. She cried so much. Finally I took her in my lap. She went back to sleep. Her name is Tooba. My mom said, "Finally after 18 hours we are here."

As soon as I got off the plane I saw the cars outside. Just as I was going to tell my mom she said, "Let's go outside."

When she opened the door she saw the cars. She couldn't speak. I knew why. It was that in Pakistan the drivers decorated their cars, trucks and bikes. In America they don't. There were so many differences but this was the first I noticed.

A few weeks passed. *Eid* was coming on the day. Before *Eid* I put mendi on. I washed my hands the next morning. Guess what? Today was the first day of school. Pappa drove me to school. When we drove to school I thought of talking with other people. Pappa had taught me a lot of English. When I got into the school a girl looked at me and said, "Hi."

I said "Hello."

We chatted until the bell rang. "You're new here. Can I be your friend?" she said.

"Yes," I said.

As soon as I was going to go in she asked me, "What is your name?"

"My name is Tayyaba," I said softly.

She said, "My name is Maria."

Maria asked, "Why do you have tattoos on?"

"What are tattoos?" I asked.

"Let me show you," she showed me later in the computer lab. She showed me a website of tattoos.

"This is a tattoo," she said, clicking away.

"I am wearing henna. It's part of my culture." I said, "Do you want to put some on?"

She nodded. "Ask your parents if you can come to my house."

"Okay," Maria said.

We went to class. I met three more girls. Their names are Samia, Sarah and Rabiya. They're coming over to decorate before the festival too. The day went by fast because I was having fun. After school I got a call from Maria. She could come.

At five o'clock we went shopping. We came back at six. At the store it was really different. The bags were plastic and paper. At seven o'clock the doorbell rang. It was Maria, Samia, Sarah and Rabiya. "Hi," we all said.

"*Mamma.*" I asked.

"*Kya?*" she asked.

"Maria, Samia, Sarah, and Rabiya *mendi lagay?*" I asked.

"*Ha,*" she said.

Then they asked their moms if they could sleep at my house. Their moms all gave permission. Go figure. My first slumber party in America.

Glossary of Urdu Words

ab so jow - now sleep

eder ow - come here

ha - yes

jellde - hurry

kya - what

kyoo - why

lagay - put on

mamma - mom

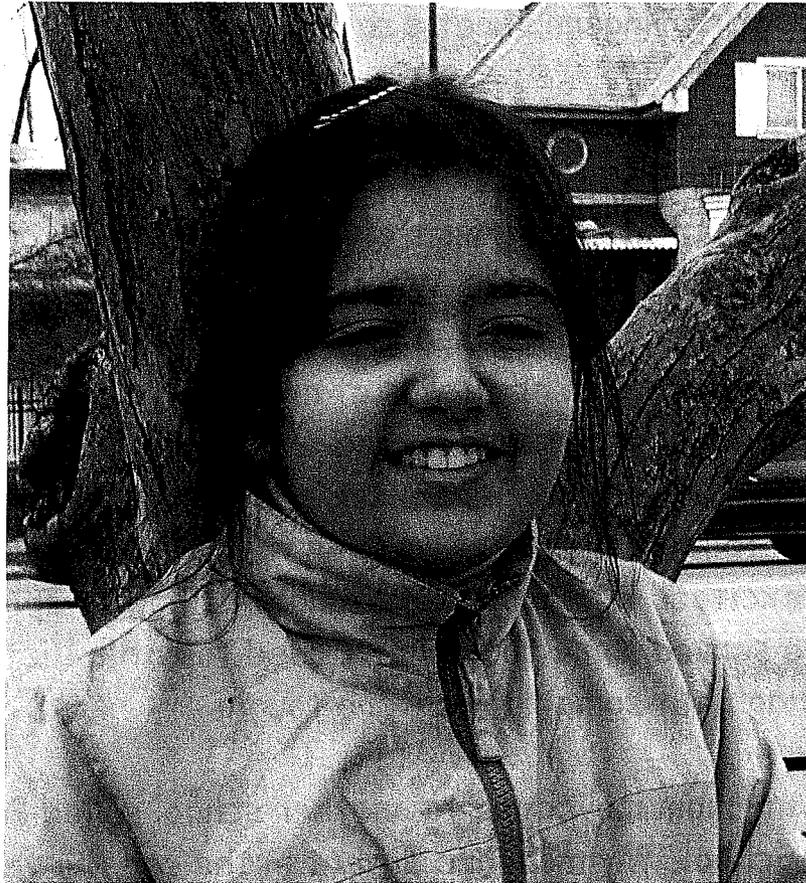
mendi - henna dye

rotti - circular, flat bread

salan - spicey dinner

About the Author

Tayyaba Hanif is a third grader. This is her first "published" story. Tayyaba's favorite subject is math taught by her favorite teacher, Mr. Tajchman, who encouraged her to try new things. She likes to play cricket and badminton. She was nine when she wrote this. Her family immigrated from Pakistan. She supports immigrant rights. She loves her parents who took her to new and exciting places.



A Monarch from Vietnam

By Khoa Vo

It took me seven days to get here. I was two years old when I immigrated to the United States from Vietnam. It was 1997. I celebrated my birthday on the airplane. I ate a birthday cake; it was delicious. I looked funny with frosting all over my face. My mom fed the cake to me. I was very scared when the plane landed. It was beautiful at the airport. There were windows everywhere. After a while, my mom got a job painting and decorating fingernails at a salon.

Shortly after we moved to Chicago, our apartment caught on fire! We were frightened. My two brothers, my mom, and I luckily came out of the fire safely. We went to my auntie's car and then my cousin's house. We stayed at my cousin's house for five months. My grandma also lived at my cousin's house. We loved to live there. While I was at my cousin's house we watched TV, played video games, and played with toys. Our favorite show to watch on TV was the *Power Ranger Teenagers*. We ate breakfast together; soon, it was our first day of school. We were so excited! At school they taught us how to speak English. They also served some food that I used to eat in Vietnam. I loved school, but some things were tough!

So my mom moved me to another school called Passages Charter School. My mom and I went in the car the very first time I went to Passages School. At first I was very shy at Passages and it was hard to make friends. Eventually other kids started to talk to me, so I felt more comfortable and made a few friends. My favorite thing at Passages was recess. We played a game called dodge ball.

I take the bus to school everyday. Sometimes I have to wait a long time for the bus to come get me. When we get off the bus all the kids run to the school. First, we go to the gym and everybody sits down. Next, I go to my class and all the students have to pay attention to Mr. Tajchman, my teacher. He taught us how to do our homework, plus a lot of other things.

My favorite day of school was last fall. It was Friday afternoon and my class was learning about monarch butterflies. We were getting ready to go on a field trip to the milkweed field at Montrose Harbor. By the time we made it there, my legs were so sore from walking so far on our field trip. We walked all the way to Lake Michigan; it was about one and a half mile walk! When we got to the milkweed field, we saw that there were milkweed plants everywhere! When we broke off a leaf it looked just like real milk. After visiting the milkweed field, we had lunch and went to the park. Ms. Wagner (our student teacher) and Mr. Tajchman took pictures of us. It was a great day. Besides laying their eggs on milkweed plants, I learned some more things about monarch butterflies. They also migrate and move from one place to another, just like me and my family.

About the Author

Khoa Vo is a third grader. He is the oldest of his mother's three sons. He lives in Uptown, in a neighborhood also known as *Little Vietnam* because of the many Vietnamese shops and restaurants. He enjoys writing and would like to write more stories and books.



Star in the Nigerian Sky

By Tobi Ewuosho

"Hi daddy!" I yelled.

"We have some bad news, Michael," my father responded.

"What?" I asked.

My father told me that we're moving, but I questioned, "Why?"

He responded, "My boss wants me to see up close how to run the business."

My brother was sneaky that night. He was so nosey. His name is Tobi. He woke up Roman, my other brother. It's always up to me to keep them out of trouble. I'm nine, Roman's eight and Tobi is six. I'm in the third grade. Roman's in the second grade and Tobi is in first. The only thing bad about my brothers is that they're nosey.

I told my parents, "How am I going to make friends? Don't I have a choice about moving to America?"

"Son, don't wake up your brother," whispered my dad.

My brother Tobi interrupted, "We're already awake."

"You guys have been listening to everything we've been saying!" shouted my dad.

My mom once told me that is called eavesdropping, but my brothers like to get smart with people. So they agreed to go to America. They said it would be an adventure, but I said, "It can be an adventure here. What about our school, our house, our friends?"

My brother said, "We can go to school in America."

My dad added, "My boss will let me earn enough money to buy a house just like Americans."

"But America may have a different culture and religion," I responded. I had learned this in school.

That night I stayed up late to watch the Nigerian sky. I looked at the stars, still surprised that we would be moving soon. The next morning when my mom was going to wake me up, I pretended that I just woke up so she would not know that I had stayed up all night watching the stars. She saw me with my uniform and asked, "Michael, did you brush your teeth, take your bath and eat your breakfast?"

I responded, "Yes, yes, and yes."

She was so surprised that she could barely speak back to me. Then she said, "Go wake up your brothers." My brother Roman sleeps by himself on a bed. Tobi sleeps on a bunk bed on the middle bunk. My mom keeps her Nigerian clothes on the very top bunk. One whole bed for clothes! Can you believe that? I woke them up and they just went back to sleep. I told them, "We're going out to the market for something to eat." And they came jumping off the couch and they almost bumped their heads on the

wall. Then they saw that they couldn't go back to sleep so they went to go brush their teeth.

Today we had soccer. Roman and I play soccer with the 7, 8, and 9 year olds. Roman and I are on the Stars. We play against the Lions. My brother Tobi is on the little kids Lions. His team has less skilled people than my team. They lose a lot but I still support him. So now while we were going we thought we were late, but we were on time. It was the 3, 4, and 5 year olds, I call them the Little Tots. I think it's funny because last time thought I scored a goal for my team and by accident I scored a goal against my team. I was so mad we lost the championship game. Everyone was so mad and surprised that I would score a goal on my own teammates. I was so out of control when I kicked that goal. I told my dad and he answered, "Michael, that happens sometimes." That night I cried for a long time.

On Monday when I told my friends that I had to move to America they were upset and asked exactly what I asked, "Don't you have a choice?"

I responded, "No!"

From that afternoon my friends didn't talk to me. I was lonesome. I was as sad as an endangered panda that I read about in my nature book. I went to my friend's house and told his mom to tell him that I'm sorry, and I told my mom the same thing. The next day on Tuesday, my friends were finally talking to me. We were friends again, but I realized one of my friends was having a birthday. I went home after school and I told my mom that my friend's birthday was coming up.

She asked, "Oh, when?"

I said, "May 30th."

I asked her, "What should I get him?"

"Get him a pet," interrupted my Dad.

"That's a great idea!" I responded.

So I got him a puppy with my allowance. Finally his birthday was here. So, while the party was going on, I realized that tomorrow I am leaving to America! So when he opened the presents I blurted, "Open mine first!"

"Okay! Okay!" he added.

And he opened the present and puppy jumped up. He gasped, "You're rough. I'm going to name you Ruff House."

So after that I went home to pack. Then after a while later, I noticed it was five-thirty. I was surprised that we were going to America. We went on the planes, but I thought we were special because we were the only ones to go on a big plane at first and then it filled up. When we got to America I was tired and so were Daddy, Mommy, Roman, and Tobi. The second day I was in America my mom enrolled me in a school.

"In math I am a star student," I told Mommy.

I am in math class. I'm thinking of doing a sport on the court called basketball.

"Oh yeah," I added quickly, "They call football *soccer*." My mom said that I should try out for basketball. So today was basketball tryouts and I passed so now I am on the team. I am going to play the center because I'm so tall. Our team name is the Lakers. Since we're in Chicago we have play other teams in the city. At night I gazed at the stars. We have a pop quiz in math. I have to study all night. The day is here to take the test. We all have to sit in different seats. I passed the test and that was $\frac{3}{4}$ of our whole grade.

Today is the day before the basketball championship. For the 2006 championship game we're going to face the 2005 champions, the Lakeshore Elementary T Wolves. The "T" Is short for Timber. They have a tall kid called Kevin Garnet and he is just as tall as I am. We're both over five feet. So there should be a big competition.

It's 70 to 70 and there's two minutes on the clock. My best basketball friend, Miguel, passes the ball to me and I shoot from a three point line and I made it. I'm a star player.

Everybody says, "Go Michael!"

I'm so proud of myself. My number is 10. My dad remembered that was his lucky number.

Today is Monday and there are twins in our school. Their names are Jessie and Jackson. They are from Texas. I've always pictured Texas like an old place with a lot of barrels. They were way different than what I pictured. They were normal human beings like me.

Today I enrolled in wrestling. My coach said the best channels to watch it are channel 8 on Friday at seven o'clock and on channel thirty nine on Monday at 8. Since I have cable I can watch it. I at least know about forty three names of wrestlers. Today is Friday, so I'm watching Channel 8.

My uncle buys us McDonald's every Friday. We each get Happy Meals.

So now I am friends with the new kids Jessie and Jackson. I would expect them, since they are twins, to wear the same thing, but they didn't. Jessie wore a wrestling shirt and Jackson wore just some very neat, good clothes. Jackson is the one who wears neat clothes. Jessie had the wrestling clothes. They are both my age and they are one inch taller than I am.

Since I was playing with my Game Boy in class I got detention the same time as basketball practice. Luckily, the coach gave me a pass to use.

So it's Wednesday today. "Today is no school," I shouted and woke up my brothers. I watched TV so much I cried because of the light, which is unusual to cry because of the light. That's why I'm unique. I can even make a very freaky face.

I talked Jessie into getting on the basketball team and he agrees with me. He said that he loves basket ball, but our parents force us to do math. There is this kid in our math class and the teacher hates him. Okay, say she says what is five divided by one. He'll say five. She'll say wrong and when she asked Jessie five divided by one. He'll say five and she'll say right. It's like she hates him but I feel sorry for him. I don't want her to hate me. Then my life would be over. And I have big plans for my future. I want to

have a two story house and I want to be an engineer. Tobi wants to be an architect and Roman wants to be a lawyer. And what do you know—they all fit our personalities. Remember Miguel, my basketball friend? He is from Guatemala. So he is going for a year to see his grandma. I'll be so sad when he's gone. I told my mom everything. She mentioned, "You should try to write him so you guys will stay in touch with each other."

"But it still won't be the same," I whined.

So finally after some weeks I wrote to him. He wrote back quickly and said he's on a soccer team. He'll probably make a lot of goals. Miguel wrote back.

Dear Michael,

I'm doing well in Guatemala. I have a confession. I didn't score any goals and everyone makes fun of me. I hate it here! I haven't told my parents.

*Your Basketball friend,
Miguel*

I cried as I read the letter continuously. I felt sorry for Miguel and I'm surprised he didn't tell his parents. I told my mom and she just couldn't say anything. Finally, she said fiercely, "What happened to him?"

I responded, "I don't know. I think he's under a lot of pressure because he hates it there in Guatemala."

My mom told me to write a letter back to him. I don't even know what to write. I waited for like a month before I wrote back to

him. I brought his letter to school and showed Jessie and Jackson and the two couldn't say a word at first. They asked fiercely just like my mom, "What happened?"

I reported, "I don't know."

They suggested that I write back to him just like my mom. I thought in my head. Why is everything and everybody repeating? In math class I thought I would be in detention just like yesterday.

Today all we did in basketball class was sprints. I usually walk home. My legs were way too sore and before I knew it I saw my whole basketball team in the bus. I usually see them running or jogging to school. I went home and told my mom that everybody in the whole school knows me. My mom said that means that you're popular. The next day everybody hollered, "Hi Michael." I shouted, "Hi," back to them. I was surprised that the whole school, even the pre k and kindergarten know my name. I'm speechless. I can't say a word and the teacher loves me here. I kind of like it here better than Nigeria. Nigeria is my home. I heard it can get as cold as -20 F here in Chicago. That's so cold. Nigeria can get only as cold as 49 F. That's not that cold. As long as it's not that cold I'm alright.

Jackson was absent today. He's usually never absent. I asked Jessie and he said that Jackson went out of town to Texas.

In basketball we didn't do sprints. We just shot some hoops. So I was able to walk home. Today my brothers were quiet and I knew why. Today we get our allowance and they were quiet as mice. I've never seen them so quiet. I was surprised. We each get \$5.00 a week. My mom said I should always take money from

people with my right hand. I don't know why, but I guess it's a mystery.

Then the next day everyone was screaming, "Party at Michael's house!" Then I was thinking, "Okay?" My parents don't get home until tomorrow. Then my mom called. She said that her trip was delayed and she was coming home in half an hour.

The party was so wild I couldn't stop it. Then my dad came home and he was surprised at what I did. So my dad and I had a long talk. I got grounded as long as they said so.

So from that day on I didn't talk to anyone. I couldn't write to Miguel. I didn't feel happy. I just couldn't risk getting in more trouble. So my parents tortured me for the rest of my life.

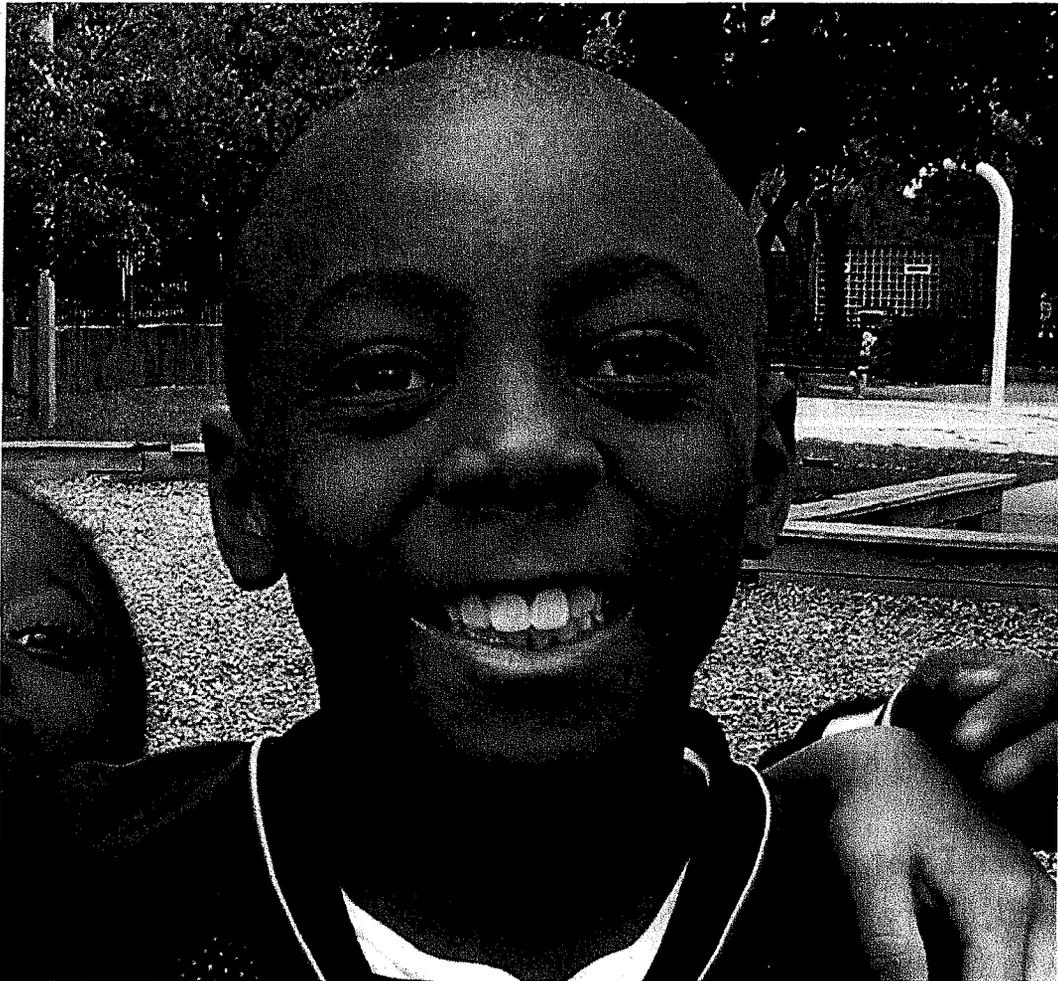
Well since then I was as quiet as a bug. I got A's on all of my subjects except in gym. I got a B. So mom and dad were proud. But, I was still grounded for life.

Then on the last day of school when I graduated from 3rd grade to 4th grade I only saw my aunt and not my other friends. The ride home took about 30 minutes. I think time froze because it felt like hours and hours and hours. I was as sad as someone's child getting kidnapped. So you can see how I felt so sad.

So when I got home my aunt opened the door and everybody roared, "Surprise Michael!" Everybody was there - all my friends. It was so cool. It was so outrageous. I just had to say, "Wow!" So, it was all a trick just to get me not thinking about my own birthday. I can't believe I forgot.

About the Author

Tobi Ewuosho is a 3rd grade student at Passages School. Both of his parents are from Nigeria. He has one brother and one sister. He likes playing sports. His favorite subjects are math and science.



How My Parents Got to Chicago

By Yamil Velazquez

This story is dedicated to my mom.

I am writing about how my parents got to Chicago. My parents came from Mexico, from a dirty and big town. I've been to Mexico twice. The town looks foggy and it's very hot there. The life in Mexico is so *exelente!* In Mexico there are a lot of stores and cars. Mexico is a really big country. My mom likes Mexico a lot. That's why she used to live in Mexico. Mexico is kind of a poor country. There is really good spicy Mexican food there, such as spicy tacos and spicy turkey. They even have churches and funeral homes in Mexico. My mom lived in Mexico while she was growing up. My mom used to go to school in Mexico, but now she goes to school in Chicago. My mom came to Chicago by a bus and by a plane. From Mexico she took a bus to San Antonio. From San Antonio she took a plane to Chicago. My mom traveled a long distance to get to Chicago.

My mom had trouble learning English when she moved to Chicago. She also had trouble finding a perfect job to go to everyday. My mom is an immigrant. Her first job in Chicago was working at Fed Ex. At her job she had to wear a uniform. She also had to carry big, heavy boxes. One day when she was carrying a really heavy box she injured her back. She had to go to the hospital to see a doctor. I was so worried about my mom that I didn't even do my homework. I went to the hospital to see her, she didn't look very good. But the next day when I visited her, she was much better. I was so happy she was alright. When she recovered, she had to look for another job. She had a hard time finding a new job. I felt very bad for my mom. Three

months after she got hurt, she found a good job! The job was helping children. She also goes to college in Chicago. Sometimes when I do my homework, she does her homework with me. It takes my mom a long time to do her homework; it's a lot more difficult than mine. She has about five pages of homework every night! I only get a little bit of homework. My mom is a very hard working student.

Today my mom had a tough exam at school. When she came home she looked very worried. I asked her, "What happened? Why are you so worried?" She said, "I didn't pass my big exam today." I said, "It's ok, maybe you can pass it tomorrow." My mom said, "No, I can't pass it tomorrow because today was the last day of having the exam." I am so worried for my mom. I told her, "Well, there's nothing we can do about it mom so don't worry. You can have a good time at home with me. I promise you are going to have a good time with me tonight." I told her we can watch a movie or we can play with my new toys. I'll do anything to help her have fun. I also told her we can eat whatever she wants.

My mom studies a lot. She really enjoys it. My mom said that studying is very fun to do on your days off. I think it's so boring! I'd rather play with my toys or video games. I also like watching movies. Sometimes I go outside for a little fresh air and then come inside and eat cookies with cold milk. After playing for a long time I get tired and go to bed. In the morning I sometimes get up with really red eyes. That means I didn't get enough sleep the night before.

One day we went to a big march downtown; it was called the Immigration March. There were a lot of people in the march. I heard there were 400,000 people in the march! The streets were full of people and all of the streets were closed with no cars

allowed on the streets. There were all different flags from different countries around the world. That's what makes this place so great. I'm so happy I live in the United States. I'll live here forever!

About the Author

Yamil Velazquez is nine years old. He was born on October 31, 1996 in Chicago. His mom and dad are from Mexico. He goes to Passages Charter School, and is in third grade. He has a lot of friends.



Baba Baba's Journal

By Lasbat Odunsi

March 13, 2006

Daddy and Mommy are looking for something, and my brother is crying like an infant. They're looking through cabinets and under the beds. My sis is at school working. She is so busy. Busy at home and she won't talk to me. I'm as mad as a wet cat at her. My big brother is getting ready for his test so he is busy too. My mother said, "It is stress in Nigeria." My dad replied, "I wish we could go to America." I was thinking, "What about your jobs and our school? We all wondered, probably. So then, my sister said, "I think we should take a day off." "We can go but it is not good," my brother said. Then my sister said, "I love Nigeria." "Nigeria is our life," said my two brothers. I was thinking, "How are we going to get there?" "That's true," my sister said. I was happy as a pony with a sugar cube because my sister was finally talking to me for the first time in a while. I asked her, "Can you talk to me outside for a minute? Yes, or no." My sister said, "I will talk to you." So we talked under the tree. She was saying the reason she didn't talk to me was because she thought I was going to get mad at her since she told my secret to my friend when she went to visit her earlier. While we were talking, my friend called me and said, "Tell your sister I said 'Hi' Okay?" Strange. So mommy came in my room. "Are you going to bed?" my mother asked. "I am going to bed mommy", I said. "Then good night," she said. I didn't fall asleep right away. I listened to my parents. So my dad and my mom were talking about us going to America. "How are we going to America?" my mom asked. "We can take a plane to

America," my dad said. "Let's talk about this tomorrow." "Okay," my mother replied.

March 18, 2006

Dad and mom are still talking about how we are going to get out of Nigeria. They decided already it would happen. They had a plan, but when they called our school and the school didn't believe them. Mom and dad called their jobs, but they didn't believe them either. So we went to school and mommy and daddy's job. Then we told them in their face. Their bosses told them that they were sorry that they didn't believe my parents. "It's Okay," my mother said. Then when we got home, my sister and I went into our room and talked about our problems. My sister asked about how to deal with our friends in Nigeria and about our school. I told her that those problems we should keep in mind. So when mommy called us inside to eat. We were telling mommy that we hoped grandma and grandpa could come with us. My mother said, "What?" She said, "Okay, guys." My dad and my brothers went out to the market. Michael and Richy came back from the market. Cindy said, "It is real stress in Nigeria." I wonder where she got that from.

March 19, 2006

Mama, Cindy and I went to church. They talked about believing in yourself. When they started to pray, Cindy and I went outside. Then when Cindy and I came back from outside, I could see mom was wondering where we had gone. So mom said, "Whenever the pastor is talking to you, listen. You don't go out, okay?"

March 20, 2006

It is time to go to school and work. Mommy is making breakfast. Daddy is wearing his shoes to go to work. Richy can't tie his shoe

and nobody had time to help him. When Michael was done putting on his shirt he helped Richy tie his shoes.

March 21, 2006

Today, we didn't go to school and work because it was a holiday. Instead of us going to school and work, we played a game at home. Cindy and Richy went outside and they were eating bread. When they went out, I went out too and we played soccer. Then, when mama called us in to talk to grandma and *baba baba*, Grandma asked us if we wanted them to come along. We all replied, "Yes." Then we called our cousins. They wanted to come along too. It was too many people to come along with us. Maybe they could come later.

March 22, 2006

It was my uncle's birthday. We made him a good cake to eat. It was very good. My mother asked me if I wanted to eat some cake, but I didn't want anything to eat. Then I told my mom not to worry about the cake.

March 23, 2006

Mama, Cindy and I went to the market. We bought guava, papaya, bananas, and a lot of vegetables. My mother asked us if we wanted to go on a plane to Chicago! Cindy and I answered, "No way!" "Why?" she asked. We once saw the planes take off from the airport when our cousins moved away. The plane was so wobbly. It looked like it was going to crash. When we got home that afternoon, Daddy, Michael and Richy were watching TV on the chair. My mother asked them to get their stinky feet off the table. Then Cindy and I told them to move so we can sit on the chair too. Michael and I went outside and played until it was time to eat dinner. Mommy made us do math, which was so boring.

March 24, 2006

Daddy went to work and mommy went shopping. Cindy, Michael, Richy, and I went outside to buy food and play. I bought boiled eggs and milk because I was hungry and thirsty. Cindy bought a tiny bit of plantain to eat. I asked if she was not hungry and she said she wasn't. I suddenly felt as shy as a turtle in its shell. When mommy woke up, she was so worried. So she went outside and she saw us. She asked us, "Why are you eating market food?" Michael answered, "Because there is no food in the house." "There is food," replied my mom. "No there isn't," Annie said. "Let me go and check," said mommy. "There is no food in the house," she agreed. "Then let me call your daddy to buy food on his was home." Later, dad came home with plenty of food. After we ate, we took a nap.

March 25, 2006

Michael, Cindy and Richy are still sleeping. I am awake because I wanted to hear what mommy and daddy were saying. They didn't say anything. I was wondering are they still sleeping. So I went inside their room. They were out cold. I am the only one awake. It's my time to wonder.

March 26, 2006

We went to our cousins' house to play with them. It was very fun. After playing, it was time to leave but our cousins are sleeping over. Now it was time to go to sleep. Everybody was happy to go to sleep. I went to sleep this time. We woke up in the morning and ate breakfast. Cindy, Helen and I went to the market to buy fruit. We also played outside. Helen and I went to play with *banga*. It was a kind of fire cracker. When we threw it up in the air, it exploded. My cousin was yelling, "Wee! Wee!"

March 27, 2006

After Helen and I finished playing with the *banga*, we went inside. Mommy was making rice and chicken. It was so good. After dinner, Helen asked, "Can we go feed the animals in the pens?" I said, "Yes we can, let's go." First mommy gave us the scraps to put it in the pens. After a while, Helen and I came back inside. Ricky, Michael and Cindy were jealous that Helen and I went to feed the animals. "So what did you guys do," asked Cindy. "None of your bees wax," we said. "Just forget it," responded mommy.

March 28, 2006

Richy and Helen are the smallest and they get to go to the playground. They had a lot of fun. When they came back, they were so tired. They took a nap. We had to be super quiet. When we're taking a nap they are never quiet. Yesterday, when Helen and I were playing the *banga*, we had so much fun. I was remembering it. Cindy was mean to Helen. I just went outside.

March 29, 2006

Cindy asked Helen and me if she could apologize. We told her, "Of course." "I'm really sorry," Cindy replied. I told her, "That's okay. Let's go and eat dinner for the night."

March 30, 2006

Daddy and Mommy told Helen, Joshua, Richy, Michael, Cindy and me that we were going to Chicago April 2nd. We were all happy because Helen and Joshua's mom and dad are coming too. Yeah. Yeah. Today Helen and Richy went to school. They learned how to spell words. They spelled a few three letter words. Those are the only words they knew how to spell. After awhile, they came back from school. They told us their teacher invited us to come over for dinner tonight. Mommy dressed up Helen and daddy dressed up Richy. They were both as proud as a mother

that just gave birth. Mommy asked us if everybody ready. "Yes," we said together. "Then let's go now before we're late." Meanwhile, we got there and there was a lot of food. Everything looked delicious. Mommy told me not to take any food. Ms. Estes and her husband came to tell us to have a seat on the chairs. It was like a party because there was much on. Balloons were everywhere. Helen and Richy went to go and play with the balloons and the dolls.

The party was almost over. We were wearing our shoes to go home. Daddy stepped outside while we were putting on our shoes. When daddy came back in we all said, "Bye Ms. Ester and bye Mr. Julius." Ms. Esther answered, "Be safe." At last we got home safe and sound. Richy and Helen quickly went into the house and wore their night clothes. Next mommy and daddy put Richy and Helen to bed. After that, mommy came to check on me and see if I was sleeping. I wasn't sleeping so she pulled the *cane* out. Then I went straight to sleep. I was angry as a bull dog. I wanted to stay up. The next morning a strange sound woke everybody up, even Joshua's parents and Helen's parents are sleeping at our house. Everybody was so scared. Then we looked outside to see what it was. When we went to see what it was. Across the street, there was fire and everybody was running and shouting. So daddy took some buckets and began filling them with the other neighbors. They sprayed the fire away. It was a stove that caused the fire. At least nobody was hurt some people were crying but everything was alright.

April 1, 2006

"It's Saturday," Cindy shouted. It is good Saturday. That means daddy and uncle are going to take us to the city park that has rides. We were excited but we knew we had to do something first. We were told to get ready and remember to pack all our

things and clothes because tomorrow we leave for America. Everybody started to pack everything. I was crying that we are leaving. Mommy cheered me up with her stories. Soon, I was as glad as a monkey that is eating a bunch of bananas. After our long day at the park we said good bye to everything one last time and prepared to leave it behind us. We left behind grandma and grandpa. Even though we wanted them to come, they said their lives were in Nigeria in the red soil.

April 2, 2006

Today we went to the airport. The airport had to check our bags and purses to see if we had dangerous things. The airport was very weird. Mama told me to shut my mouth. After a while they put us in this big huge airplane. Helen and Richy were scared to go in it. In a while, we got in the plane. I was scared as a little bird that was going to get eaten up. Now the plane was moving around. The plane landed in London so we could switch planes. I never heard of a water fountain before. It didn't seem very clean to me. It was nasty. Later we got back in the plane. It was not that good. Next they put on an American movie but I didn't watch it, I was looking out the window to see how America would look. When we got to America we had to stay in a hotel. I never heard of a hotel with an elevator. When we woke up in the morning, there was hot food outside the room. I was shocked. I asked mommy if an invisible person got into the hotel. "No. It is just room service," mommy answered. After a while everybody sat at the table to eat breakfast. The breakfast was pretty good.

April 7, 2006

We went outside today. It was spring. It was warm outside but at least it was not as hot as Nigeria. The playground had swings. It was fun. Helen, Richy and Joshua went on the slide a bunch of

times. Going on to the slides were fun. I thought Chicago was going to be a place filled with junk but I guess I was wrong. It was almost time to go home. Now we don't live in the hotel anymore, we found an apartment just off of Clark Street. Helen, Richy and Joshua did not want to go home they loved the slides. Anyways, we had to force them to go. They still didn't come so we did a trick on them. The trick was to say that we are coming back tomorrow so they come with us. On the way, we saw a guy selling ice cream. So we bought some.

April 8, 2006

Today I wasn't so happy because I didn't want to leave my country. I was thinking it was more fun in Nigeria than here. Then I saw the TV. I turned it on. I put it on channel 55. It is called Disney Channel. It was funny and cool. I enjoyed it so I just kept on that channel. Mama, Auntie and Helen went to Jewel Osco. They heard about Jewel from some of the neighbors. I wanted to go but I stayed home. Mama, Auntie and Helen came back from Jewel, they bought a lot of things. At dinner, we ate steak, rice and a new vegetable: broccoli. It was delicious. After dinner we went to bed but I don't want to go. I went to bed anyway.

April 9, 2006

The next morning mommy made eggs and toast. It was good. Next it was time for us to go to school. I was really shy because it was my first day. My school isn't that far. It is just by my house. When I got to school these three girls saw me and asked me if I was an immigrant. "Yeah, why?" I replied. "Because we are immigrants," answered the three girls. "You're in class 103 responded one girl." "What are your names," I asked. Their names were Ree, Stephanie, and Josephine. "You're in the same class as me," replied Josephine. "Let's go then." "Today we are

going to learn about multiplication," said my new teacher, Ms. Estes. Yeah. "Who can tell me what is 5×5 ," asked Ms. Estes. I quickly raised my hand. I said 25 and it was the right answer. Everybody was clapping and yelling. I think nobody knows their multiplication. Then Ms. Estes asked me 10×3 . I figured, 30. It was the correct answer. Then she asked me one more and it was 12×11 . I knew it. The correct answer was 132. Everybody was clapping. So then Ms. Estes told me I am a smarty pants. I think it was a compliment. It was time to go home. I watched for my mom. I was glad to see her and tell her about my day. We had to walk home because my school was not far. When I got home, Auntie and her friend were making rice and soup.

June 2, 2006

I love Chicago. It is very fun. I have a life in Chicago. A short time ago, we moved into a bigger house and the house has a backyard. We always go and play at the backyard. It is fun. It is almost time to go to bed. My bedroom is blue and red because they are my favorite colors. I really love my room.

June 3, 2006

I dreamed of planting flowers and taking care of them. When I woke up I smelled the pancakes. They smelled so good. After breakfast, I went to school.

In June, we were still learning about multiplication. This time Ms. Estes asked other people not me. People had to count with their hands. Josephine was really working to find out 12×10 . Then everybody said, "We give up." Then I told them the answer, 120. Ms. Estes was so glad but not with the other kids. I went home and I saw Helen and Richy playing in the backyard. I told them to keep on having fun. I went inside the house and Cindy was watching this channel. I didn't know what it was. So I went to my

room. Joshua and Michael were playing video games. Mama and Auntie were cooking. Daddy and Uncle were fixing the car. Everybody was doing something except me. It reminded me of the first day when I started writing in the journal *baba baba* gave me. Everybody was too busy for me that day too. He gave it to me for my birthday and told me write about what happens and how I feel. Now as I am writing again. I wonder if he knew of about my parent's plans to leave Nigeria before I did. I wonder if he knew that I would use it to write about getting used to things in a new country. I wonder if he knew that I would write about my worries when we got a long distance phone call from Nigeria about him. I still love my family back at home. I will miss all the flowers and the *banga*.

Glossary of Yoruba Words

banga - fireworks

cane - stick

mama - mom

baba baba-grandfather

About the Author

Lasbat Odunsi is a third grader. She plays soccer with a team called the Thirty-six Lions. She plays goalie. Both of her parents are from Nigeria and they immigrated to America. She has two brothers and one sister. Her favorite subject is science.



Sami, I am

By Nasreddine Mehta

After four years of life I hated my life. My life seemed like a disaster. Until it all came to this. My parents said, "We are going to America."

I said, "No. I don't want to go to America."

"We *will* go in one week," mom said.

I was very sad and mad. I tried to just forget all about going to America. Then, the day arrived. Once we went to the airport we had to wait two days because the plane was blocked out and delayed.

So we waited and waited. Then the second morning came. We drank our coffee and went on our flight. Then I saw my cousin, Amine, boarding the same flight. We had a lot of fun listening to the pilot's radio. I thought, "Maybe this won't be so bad."

We first landed in Italy. My cousin was playing with me. We had to stay for one day. We didn't have Italian money to get food but we had snacks we brought from Algeria. Then I went to sleep. The next morning we had to hurry. The plane almost left. Good thing we got there in time. Everybody was happy once we got there.

We went off to America. In the airplane seats there were mini TVs. I was freaked out when the plane took off. The flight took more than a day.

Once we finally got to America I liked it a lot. Then we went to our new house my mom said, "I really like this place it is phenomenal". My dad took me outside to play. My birthday came and I got a lot of presents like a bike and a ball. I was so happy! After five days Halloween began. I got a costume and way too much candy so I wanted to eat all of it. My birthday is on October 26, 1995.

My mom told me we were going to celebrate Eid. She said, "It will be fun." Once we got there. It was so fun!!!! There was a clown that made balloons into dogs, swords, all sorts of stuff. There was a bean bag race and even a moon jump. Then I became friends with another boy named Othman. He was 4 $\frac{1}{2}$. I was 5 $\frac{1}{2}$. I was bigger than him. He had a sword balloon. I also had one so we played like we were knights.

The best part about the celebration is when you pick your own table and eat pizza with your friends. The grown ups are somewhere else. The men and women are separated. The men are on the left and the women are on the right. They eat rice with chicken. After all that they sort the kids in age groups: 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Next, we went in the other room and got presents.

Once I turned six years old I went to a school named Hibbard School. I was in first grade and I made a lot of friends. But in second grade I went back a grade then I had to go Palmer School. Then I turned eight years old.

I was growing so fast I didn't notice. One day there was no school because of a holiday or teachers' meeting. So my mom took my friend and cousin to *Chuck E. Cheese*. It was so fun. There were games, prizes and rides. You had to buy a gold coin called a token for one game or ride. You can win tickets to win prizes. I eventually collected 912 tickets in five days.

Then I went to third grade and made a lot of friends. I wonder about how my life would have been if we stayed back in Algeria.

About the Author

Naserddine Mechta is a third grade student at Passages Charter School. He and both of his parents are immigrants from Algeria. Naserddine is a player for his soccer team. He's almost the best. His favorite subject is science. He has one sister.



Falling Down and Getting Up

By Armin Ogorinac

I was born in Germany. When I was born, my mom was happy. I was a very tiny baby. When I was two, I moved to Bosnia to live with my grandma. One time I was sitting on a chair and the window was open. Then I fell out; my grandma caught me. Then the second time I fell, my grandma was worried, but when she looked out the window she saw me lying down. I just got up and I was okay.

When there was a war in Bosnia, I moved to the United States of America. The war started in 1992 and went until 1995. 110,000 people got killed just because of that war. I came to America when I was five years old. I thought I wouldn't like it here, but then I made two friends. Their names were Mirela and McDonald. McDonald was my mailman. He talked to me about his route and everything. I was learning to speak English.

Soon after that, I started school. My school is Passages Charter School. Two years later, when I was seven I had to move to a bigger house. Then it was my birthday. I became eight and went to third grade. Now I am almost in fourth grade.

I remembered when I first came on an airplane. I was as scared as a baby deer. I started to cry. The streets seemed weird. One of my favorite things to do now is to watch wrestling on TV, *Smackdown vs Raw*. I have a lot of favorite wrestlers on this show: are Ray Mastero, Batista, and Eddie Guerra. I also like karate, soccer, dodge ball, hockey, ice skating, skating, basketball, baseball, and football. I learned that writing is fun

and I especially like to write about immigration. I also learned that if you fall down, you should get up when you can.

About the Author

Armin Ogorinac is in third grade at Passages Charter School. He is eight years old. In school he makes a lot of friends. He plays sports and likes to exercise. He is excited to go to school. His birthday is on August 28. He was born in 1997. He is thankful for his family and friends.



Planting Ahead

By Hussein Atoro

I dedicate this book to my mom.

Hi, my name is Hussein! I will explain how I got very sick as a child and needed a better life. When I was five years old in Nigeria, I thought life was very enjoyable. Then all of these people around me started to get very sick. I also got sick. My mom said, "We have to go to America to get you better." We had very little money though, so my mom had to work very hard to save money to go to America. After she went to work and saved \$700.00, we were able to plan our way to America. I got even sicker. A huge rash spread over my entire body. My mom knew we had to go to America right away to get treatment. My mom came home from work one day and said, "We will be moving to America in a couple of days." Back then I didn't know where we were moving. I was happy we were leaving Nigeria, but also nervous because I didn't know what America will be like. My mom said, "We are moving to a big city where Lake Michigan is and it has one of the tallest buildings, The Sears Tower." Before we moved, I was only able to take one suitcase with me. I packed my clothes, toothbrush, and shoes.

We went to the airport and gave them the airplane ticket to go to America. I was really scared to get on the plane; I had never been on one before. When the plane took off it felt like a broken plane that might crash! Then I started to get used to it and was able to relax a little before the plane landed. Much, much later that night we landed in Chicago, Illinois. I thought the houses, apartments and all the cars were really nice. We found a place to live in Uptown.

Once we got settled, my mom took me to the doctor. The doctor gave me special medicine and I felt much better. It was time to go to school. I went to a school called St. Mary of the Lake. I was in first grade. I had friends named Tawo and Keyinday. They were my family friends from Nigeria. They forgot what I looked like because they left Nigeria a long time ago. As time went on, I made more friends and was very happy. My mom bought us this really cool computer for our home. She taught me how it works and let me use it by myself. When I came home from school, I usually played games on the computer. One day at my school, it was report card day. When my mom and I went to school, my teacher was acting really crazy and didn't have a report card for me. My mom was very upset and found a different school for me. When I was in second grade, I went to a school called Passages Charter School. I met a lot of students from Nigeria like me. I had made many new friends at Passages; their names are Tobi, Amin, Noorani, and Yamil. First I knew Tobi since we were cousins in Nigeria. We always played with each other. Tobi really liked to play soccer.

One day I came home and my mom told me we were moving to a different house. The house was much closer to my school, so I wouldn't have to walk far. Then my mom surprised me and bought a new car. At first my mom didn't know how to drive. So she read the car instructions and took lessons. Before she started to drive, she always fixed the mirror and checked to see if anyone was coming so she wouldn't crash into another car. She drove around a lot for practice, and now she's an excellent driver! She drives me to school everyday.

Sometimes I had tests at school and they were very difficult. When I would take my tests I would often daydream

and have a hard time focusing. I would write anything on my paper and was very embarrassed. I learned to study hard for tests at home. One day I got a test back and I got a very good grade, I was excited and proud of myself.

Now here is the end of my story. It is like a fantasy for when I get older:

I went to high school after I finished eighth grade. It was a huge school! When I got there I started to learn right away and enjoy school and myself. My teachers told my mom I was really smart and that made her very proud. My teachers all told me, "You should go to college!" I really enjoyed plants and flowers. So I found a college that had a special program with plants. College was a lot of work. Afterwards, I became a business man; I owned a business that helped people plant their gardens. It was a wonderful job! I'm fifty years old now. I still enjoy planting and spending time with my mom.

About the Author

Hussein Atoro is nine years old. He likes to do his best on all of his assignments and work hard. He loves plants, and his family and friends.



My New Family

By Meskerem Holt

This story is dedicated to my family.

"Hey London, I have a video camera! So can you please tell us about your life?" says her mom.

"Sure," said London. "You see, when I was just one year old, I went to live with my grandmother in a small, coastal village in the Ivory Coast. Her name was Maya. She was as beautiful as the summer ocean sparkling in the sun. When I was one, I remember how she fixed me excellent food every night. Her neighbor, Camilla, was fourteen years old and she would baby sit me on Sunday mornings. My grandmother would go to church with Camilla's mother.

Camilla would wake me up after everyone went to church. I would start crying so she would let me sleep more until I woke up myself. I would usually go to sleep for 40 seconds more and then I would start crying again so she would come and take me out of my crib so that I would be happier. After that she would take me and change my diapers. That was the best part about it!

I also remember my grandma telling me I was living with her because my mother was too young to take care of me. She was in college when she gave birth to me. This was the story about my family that I remember.

About three years later when I was four years old I learned how to speak English. This was my second language. My first

Once we got to London there were millions and millions of people. It was so crowded! When we found my mother she took us to her apartment. There were a bunch of photographs and pictures of me on the wall. I felt happy about that. We spent a whole week together and it was really fun. I was able to meet a lot of her friends in London. They were all so nice. I wished that I could come and see her and her friends whenever I wanted to.

Last night we went to a restaurant and then to a carnival. I couldn't ride the roller coaster because I wasn't old enough or big enough but my mother did. We then went back to her apartment and we saw a big bunch of flowers. I had forgotten it was mother's birthday tomorrow.

On her birthday we went to breakfast at an English restaurant. It was the best meal I had ever tasted. My mother told us how busy it was at work and so she was thinking of coming to live with us in about one and a half years. I was so excited that I couldn't sleep. I woke up about 5:59 a.m.

We flew back to the Ivory Coast. Once we got there I got lost in the airport and separated from my grandmother. Many people were trying to find me and I was scared. Finally someone found me and got me together with my grandmother. When I got together with my grandmother, she was as sweet to me as the inside of a coconut.

Later, after we settled back in, my grandmother became ill again. Camellia was the one who told me. One day, she became so ill we decided to call the emergency taxi. My grandmother died and I was told I would need to be adopted. One week later I was sent to an orphanage with a bunch of other kids. I really wished

my grandmother was still able to take care of me and mostly I wished my mother was here.

One year later I was adopted by Americans. It was weird that I had to learn another language and try to learn so many new things. Soon I met my new American mom and dad. I said, "Bonjour." They didn't know what to say. I thought they spoke French. It turned out my new mom could speak a little French so we started to speak in French. I was so relieved I knew some English already.

Once I got to Chicago, it was very dark, so I spent the night at a hotel. Next we went to our new home on a street called "Winchester." A week later my parents agreed that Dad would take me out first to a walk by the lake and go to breakfast. When we got home, my mom also took me out to the lake and then to lunch. I thought it was some weird custom but it turned out they just didn't know what the other had just done. It was funny. I loved going to Lake Michigan. It was a beautiful beach.

The next big news in our house was when my parents told me they were going to have a baby! I was screaming I was so excited. I was calling out names like Rose, Daisy and Mary. My father interrupted and said, "It's a boy." Suddenly my enjoyment went away and my smile turned upside down. My mother tried to cheer me up and said that I could help picking the name and suddenly I remembered my uncle's name, Willie. So I yelled, "What about Willie?" "That is a nice name," said my mother.

I began to like the idea of my new family and new neighborhood. I met a little girl in the neighborhood and we became friends. Her name was Emily and I said, "Cool." One day we played until it got dark.

Soon I will be starting at my new school and I am very excited about that. Unfortunately, when my mom and dad dropped me off, I knew I wasn't going to like the school because the 2nd and 3rd grade was to be combined. I would have to share a room. Guess who was in my class? Emily! In that case, I knew I would like school.

About the Author

Meskerem Holt a nine year old girl in 3rd that goes to school at Passages Charter School. She lives in Chicago, IL. Her favorite thing to do is play sports. She wrote this book because she wanted to write a story about immigration.



Sara Rattani

By Zehra Huda

This story is dedicated to my family and friends.

Hi! My name is Sara. I am 7 years old. I live in Pakistan. I was walking to school. Right now we are doing math. It is kind of hard. Now it is lunch time my mom packed me *rotie* and *kima*. We are writing, if we are quiet our names are going to go on a ticket and at the end of the day who ever gets their name pulled out, they get a prize. I'm writing about how I love my life. Here's what it said, *"My life is great. It is fun. I enjoy my life, especially when I am at school. I hope my life will last forever."*

Now is sleeping time. I love this time because sleeping is good for your brain because it gives you energy.

"Time for math again," my teacher ordered.

"Yeah, math," I hollered.

Math is my favorite thing in school. I like to do journaling, math, and writing. I also get A pluses on my tests. Now it is recess time so I am jumping rope. My friend and I had a jump rope contest. After school, I came home. My papa held my hand and took me to my mom's room. When I got there my mom had a sad look on her face. She told me we are moving to Chicago to a neighborhood called Edgewater. When I heard that I was as sad as a lost puppy. Then, I went running to my bedroom. When I got up to my bedroom I started to cry. Later, I told my friends I was leaving, but they didn't believe me. Then my teacher said, "Let's make good-bye cards for Sara." When everyone was making the

good bye notes I was playing outside. It was boring without any friends to play with. Then someone brought me in the classroom, everyone snapped "*Alafas Sara Rattani!!!!*" We had a party that night I had to pack. I packed all my cards *meri dost deyea*. "Now off to the Edgewater," said my mom.

"What's that?" I said.

"There is Edgewater in Chicago. It's near Lake Michigan," my mom said. "We are going to live near there."

In Chicago...

"Here we are," said mama. "Here we are," said pap. "Where are we?" I snapped.

I got into the house and man, it was big like a palace. I said, "I never want to leave this house mommy." My mom was glad that I liked our new house. School was starting in two weeks. I am so nervous but I'm excited too. When I walked to school in Pakistan, we got to go outside by ourselves. Now here, I'm walking to school with my mom. I reached school and everyone saw me, they yelled, "Hello." I said, "Hi." When I got to my desk there was a girl next to me. I wanted to be friends but I did not know how to become one in America. Everyday I go to school and I don't know how to become her friend, but she looks sad.

So when I went home I asked my mom. "Mom there is a girl in my class. Her name is Neela and I want to be here friend but I don't know how to be her friend," I said. Then, the other day I saw a new student. His name was Riaz. He was next to Neela so I asked Riaz if I could be his friend. Riaz said, "Yes." I was surprised. Then after that, everyday my mom took Neela, Riaz

and me to school. We were in the same class. In math, Neela, Riaz, and I helped each other. It was fun. Even if we got mad at each other, we find a way to figure the problem out.

One day when I was going to the park, I saw Riaz. He was at the park. I asked, "What are you doing here?" He said, "Neela told me you were here." "Why do you want to follow me?" I said. He said, "Because I like you." I was shocked. Riaz likes me?

Epilogue

Fifteen years later, Sara and Riaz got married. Their parents met and became friends. Neela always came to visit. She had four children; they're all twins. The twins are two brothers and two sisters.

Glossary of Urdu Words

alafas - goodbye

deyea-gave

dost- friend

meri - my

About the Author

Zehra wrote this story when she was nine years old. She really enjoyed writing it. She hopes people will enjoy her story. She says that even if you're a kid, you can still be an author. She wants to tell you Riaz and Sara Rattani are real people.



The Diary of Amina Minjakovic

By Zerina Jusic

I dedicate this story to my mom, dad and sister.

February 4, 1994

Mama and I went to a Bosnian school to celebrate Eid. My sister Emina stayed home. Emina is 10 years old and I am 13 years old.

February 5, 1994

Today mama went to visit the Habibovic's. Papa told Emina that she is going to get a bike. I went to my neighbor's house. I had a lot of laughs with their daughter. They own a store across the street. It's a flower shop.

February 6, 1994

I saw a dog being left alone. I heard from papa that grandpa is still in the war. I miss him. I wonder when he is coming home with us.

February 7, 1994

Unbelievable, grandpa is home!!!! I was so glad to see him. I thought I was never going to see him again.

February 7, 1994

I went to the hospital to help mom. I saw Dr. Leo. His son is David. My sister and I think he's cute. I thought to myself, "He is so nice to me." Emina is not old enough to have a special friend, unlike me.

Bedtime: I keep thinking about David and how nice he is.

February 8, 1994

I should take a break from writing in my diary. Oh no, I saw Misrem and I can't believe she was walking with David and his family!

February 9, 1994

Today I saw Misrem. She is so mean, like someone ignoring you. She thinks she's all that with her pretty hair and clothes. I am thinking about paying Misrem revenge by being mean to her. I'm really tired of her.

February 11, 1994

It's my birthday! I am no longer 13; I am now 14 years old. It's the greatest day of my life. It's fun having people come over to my house.

February 13, 1994

Today in school I was doing Social Studies. I hate doing Social Studies because there is this new kid in school and he keeps bothering me. Later on my parents told me that they are going to go to a party, but no kids are allowed. There is going to be a babysitter.

Bedtime: I'm in bed and I am still writing. My sister Emina has a diary. Emina wrote me, "It's strange that mom doesn't tell us bedtime stories. It's fishy."

February 14, 1994

I went to the Habibovic's house. I already know who their children are, they are Misrem and Sano. I played with Sano instead of Misrem. I said to myself, "I am not going to play with her anymore."

February 15, 1994

I heard on the news today that it is going to rain cats and dogs tomorrow. Emina is in her room playing with her toys. Emina is not writing much in her diary. I always write in my diary.

February 16, 1994

My mom said, "We are going to Chicago." I said with a mean face, "We mora mo. Sto zato nemmamo pono para." Later in the day we had to pack. Emina packed everything of hers. I packed my tooth brush. I saw God with his beaming light. It reminded me of the time when we used to have fun together.

February 17, 1994

We are on the plane. I gulped as if I were going to fall off the airplane.

February 19, 1994

I am finally in America. It is strange in this world. Emina wrote me: "It is strange in America, everything looks different. Well we are in America and we need to get used to it." Emina is right.

February 21, 1994

I am starting school. I'm in the classroom; the teacher's name is Mrs. Elizabeth. She introduced me to the class. I was so shy that I couldn't say anything.

February 22, 1994

I'm at school and I am in gym class. We are doing exercises. I met a friend named Carey. She is as beautiful as a flower. "What is your name,"? asked Carey. "My name is Amina and I'm 14," I told her.

Later:

When I was walking home from school. I saw Carey. I waved at her. She waved back at me. After Carey waved at me I saw Emina next to me. I mumbled, "How did she get here? I don't believe it."

February 24, 1994

Today I was sleeping. All of a sudden I saw Emina jumping in her bed and said, "Wake up sleepy head." I replied, "I will. Just give me a second."

Later the same day

I am at school and writing a note to Carey. It said what language do you speak. She wrote back to me and said I only speak English. Wow- I guess she is already a citizen.

February 26, 1994

It's almost the end of February. And you know what that means!! Emina's birthday!!!

February 28, 1994

Today is Emina's birthday. I invited Carey even though she is American and might not understand our customs. We had streamers all over the place. Now Emina is eleven-years old. Oh, did I forget that I didn't go to school today.

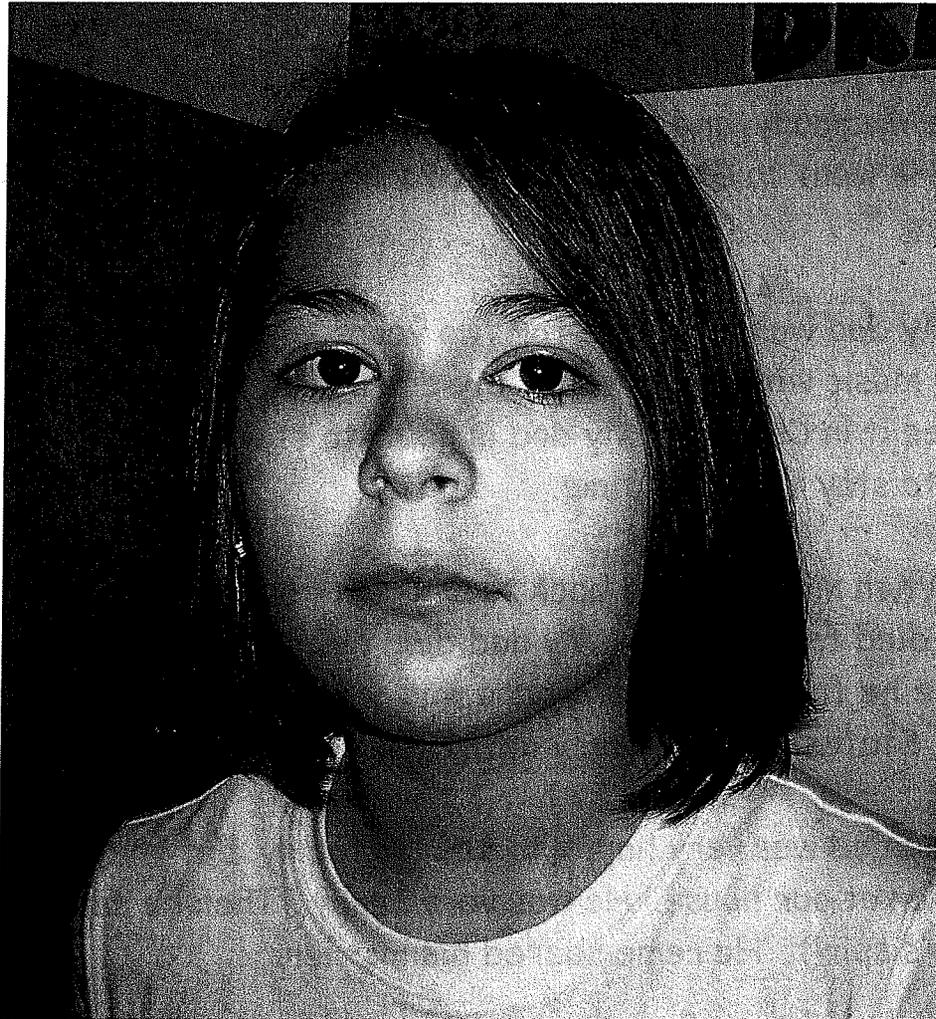
March 1st, 1994

Today I saw Carey, she is mad and I don't know why but I will figure it out. I knew it. I can tell that she is mad at her

family. She was sobbing and I asked her. "Are you ok?" Carey said, "Yes. I am mad at my family because they don't understand me." I felt sad for her but great that she told me what was bothering her. I felt like I had really made a friend.

About the Author

Zerina Jusic takes karate and loves many subjects in school. Her parents are from Bosnia. She has two younger sisters. One is a second grader and the other was just born recently.



My Dad

By Gabriel Mills

My dad was only 17. He wasn't happy until he saw his uncle. His uncle was happy to see him. My dad was only 18 when he saw him again. He planned to play music. He gave him a type of drum. My dad gave his dad a car that was his favorite colors red, black, green and yellow. My dad traveled to different places like London, Germany, and Holland, but he likes it here in Chicago the best. He went to Ghana to see his family. He wanted to go on vacation.

My dad was in college for two years, after that he wanted to play music with his friends. My dad made lots of money. He loves it in Chicago. My dad is going to stay in Chicago. He wants to stay for along time.

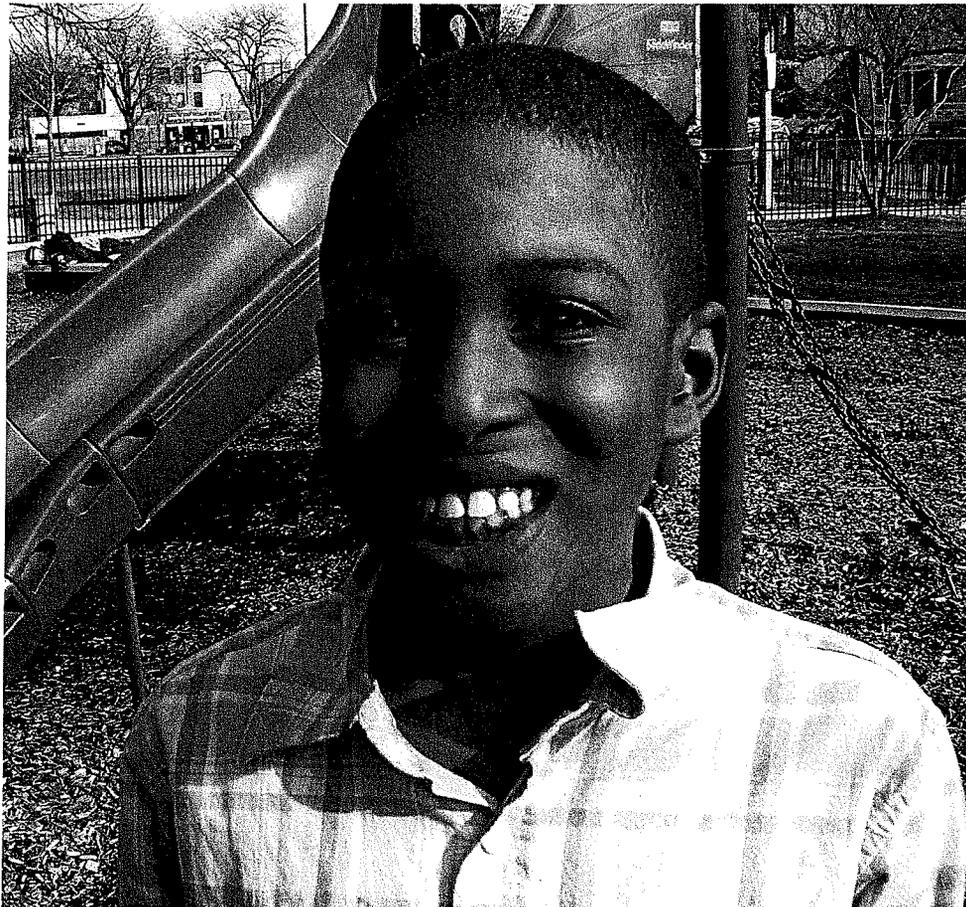
When my dad came back to Ghana he saw no food. Some people died from hunger. My dad didn't want to go back to Ghana because he found out that Ghana was poor compared to the United States. He was very upset.

My dad was very happy to see his family, but they came to stay over at our house. He was very happy. Then he saw his dead mother's spirit. He remembered his mother.

My dad is a great man. He cares for people. He's a very good man.

About the Author

Gabriel Mills is a nine year old boy. He is a third grade student at Passages Charter School. He is a boy scout and he plays basketball and football. His favorite subjects are science and math. He lives with his parents and younger sister. He loves them a lot.



New Place

By Jada DeJesus

*This story is dedicated to my friends, family
and immigrants who need help.*

"Let's go. Kick, kick, kick," said the teacher.

Edmund asked, "Do you think mom and dad will find jobs?"

"Maybe, would you study?"

"Why are we in after school program again today?"

Appolonia explained again, "Edmund I told you, mom has a interview with Mr. Laski. He knows about jobs in America. And dad is getting money so that we travel to America. Please, Edmund don't ask me again."

"So when are going to America? Next week?"

"Edmund and Appolonia do you have something to say?"
asked the fed up teacher.

"No. Sorry," she said to the teacher.

"I mean yes," directed at Edmund in a quieter voice, "We're leaving in a week."

The teacher asked, "Where are you going? To America?
What city? Chicago?"

"I think it is going to be great," said Appolonia. "Edmund, why are you crying?"

"I don't want to leave my friends."

"Edmund I'm sure they'll write to you."

A week later in America...

"Mommy, what job is there in Chicago? Dad, what will you do around the house?" we asked our parents.

"I will get a job too," he told us.

When mom asked about getting a job she heard rumors that Bush was going to sign a law making it illegal to hire immigrants like us. She heard about a strike and she joined it. Thousands and thousands of other immigrants joined the strike. They went on strike for a month. It was hard on us because my parents had to spend all the savings they brought with them and we were eating at our relatives almost everyday. Even though the strike was hurting the economy Bush still threatened to sign the law. He started to cave in to the pressure and said that he would let only certain immigrants from certain countries work. Then people thought that was not fair so they decided to stay on strike. Finally, everybody went back to work and my mom found a cleaning job. Unfortunately dad had no idea how to drive a car and he got in an accident. He got seriously hurt. We had no money for his medical bills. We still needed to go to school so mom found a school for us.

When the kids were at school the teacher asked what is 2 times 55. I slowly stood up and the teacher asked, "Por que sta

parndu? I asked her what she said in English because I couldn't understand Spanish.

She said, "Appolonia you should raise your hand not stand up."

I slowly sat down and felt very embarrassed.

At lunch everyone was looking at Edmund's food and thought it looked nasty and Edmund had no idea what a hamburger was. One day Edmund met a boy named Samuel. Samuel asked, "What are you eating?" "It is called *pierogi*."

"May I taste some?" he asked.

"Sure."

"It's delicious."

I met a girl named Mia. Mia thought that my food looked good. Mia tasted it and thought it was delicious. I thought maybe I could ask my mom to pack extra. When Edmund and I got home we asked mom, "Can you pack us extra food to share?"

Mom knew that Edmund and I had made friends. Samuel wanted Edmund to meet somebody and Mia wanted me to meet somebody. Then a couple of days later, Edmund and I found out that Mia and Samuel were brother and sister. Samuel and Mia found out that Edmund and I were brother and sister.

About the Author

Jada DeJesus is a third grader. Her grandparents on her mom's side are immigrants from Poland and Puerto Rico. Her father's background is African American. Her favorite subject is math. She also has seven brothers and seven sisters. She does not live with all of her brothers and sisters. She was born in 1997 on August 17th.



Temi and Teni

By Temi Bombata

Not long ago in a country named Nigeria, there was a family and in the family there was a mom, dad and two beautiful twins named Temi and Teni. At night, Temi went to Teni's bed and woke her up. She yelled, "What?"

Temi said, "Don't forget about the dance party tomorrow."

"Okay, now leave me alone," said Teni.

It was morning and both of them bathed, put on their nicest dresses, and quickly left the house. Their mom was really surprised. When they got to school their friend Tamika asked, "Where have you two been?"

"Well, we have been on the bus," said Temi.

"It was dirty as mud," added Teni. She brushed off her dress.

"Let's go to class before our teacher starts beating us with a stick like we're a bunch of dead pigs," warned Tamika.

So they went to class. They were learning a lot of subjects like math, science, and social studies. Then it was time to go to the dance party.

Tamika, Teni, and Temi all went to the gym. Tamika yelled, "There are so many people!"

Teni also yelled, "There's food. Look at the *dudu*, cake and *suyd*! I can't even name them all right now!"

Tamika and Teni were surprised that Temi had nothing to say because she always had something to say. She was eating a snack near the table. After a few minutes a lady came up to Teni and complained, "You just came over here and took so much food."

So when the lady came up to Teni, Tamika and Teni screamed, "What is she talking about?" Both of them went to find Temi. They looked and looked. Finally, they found her dancing. When they found her dancing they were so mad that they wanted to beat her like crazy. Then they made a plan to go home with Tamika.

"*Oya*, let's go to my house," said Tamika.

Temi and Teni said, "Okay. Whatever."

Then they got to Tamika's house.

Teni said softly, "Your *ellia* is pretty."

They came in and Tamika said, "*Mebaua*. I want to get my diary."

Tamika got her diary and they wrote in it.

"What's the other thing that happened at the dance party?" asked Temi.

"When a lady came to Teni instead of me, she complained because she thought I was the one who was taking the *onjie*."

"Let's go to our house," said Teni.

When they got there, Tamika yelled, "FINALLY, we're here!"

"What do you want to do?" asked Temi.

"We could have a party and call people to come," said Tamika.

"That's not a good idea because we might get in trouble with my parents because they're not home," said Teni.

Temi said, "That's true, we might get in trouble."

"Let's listen to music," Tamika said.

"Let's turn on the radio." They listened to music.

They all said, "It's getting hot!"

Temi said, "Let's get some food."

Then Teni said, "OK. Let's eat ice cream."

"What kind?" asked Tamika

"Chocolate," said Temi.

"My favorite," said Tamika.

Temi said, "Let's also get some cookies and *dudu*. *Dudu* is also crispy and spicy."

"Okay let's get the stuff," said Teni.

Temi yelled, "Honeydew melon also!"

Teni said, "Okay, you didn't have to yell." Teni said with an attitude.

Temi said, "Now let's turn on the music to another radio station and cut up the honey dew melon and put the chocolate ice cream on the cones for all three of us and put the *dudu* on a plate!"

Teni said, "Friday is our birthday and today is Wednesday, just two more days."

Tamika said, "Then you might as well go buy party supplies."

Temi and Teni said, "We're going to school tomorrow. We have to clean this mess before our mom and dad gets home because they will beat us like old rugs and we won't have a birthday party."

Teni said, "Be quiet, Tamika! I hear the phone." She picked it up, "Temi, Temi, it's Fatima from Chicago."

"Hello Fatima what's up?" said Teni.

Fatima said, "Nothing. I just wanted to hear your voices. But I have to go. My mom wants me to do some cooking."

"Okay, bye," said Temi.

Tamika said, "Why did I have to be quiet?"

Teni said, "I told you to be quiet because you were singing to the radio and I couldn't hear the call from Fatima. That's why I told you to be quiet. Sorry I said that."

Tamika yelled, "Okay I forgive you!"

"Bye, Tamika see you on Friday."

"Okay". Teni said, "How about for our birthday we could live in another place like New York, Chicago and California?"

Temi replied, "I would only pick one and it's Chicago because Fatima lives there and we could visit her everyday."

Teni replied, "Now let's not talk about this right now."

Temi said, "What I said was garbage because we're not moving."

Teni said, "Let's go to bed. We will have this talk another time."

Temi said, "Wake up, Teni."

Teni said, "WHAT?!"

Temi said, "Wake up. It's time for school."

"Whoa. That's so weird." Teni explained. "I just had a dream that we were still living in Nigeria. Tamika was there. There was some kind of dance party. Anyway, it seemed so real."

Temi hurried, "Would you come on. Fatima's going to be here any minute and you still haven't even got dressed yet."

Glossary of Yoruba Words

dudu - fried bananas

ellia - house

mebaua - I'm coming

ojie - food

oya - come

suya - a spicy meat on a stick

About the Author

Temi P. Bombata is a third grade student at Passages Charter School. She has a sister and two brothers. Temi wrote this because she learned so much about immigration that her teacher asked her to write a story. Both of her parents are immigrants. She is on a soccer team. The name of it is Thirty-Six Lions soccer academy.



One Life Old, One Life New

By Kayla N. Enriquez

I dedicate this story to
my mom and my sister, well my family.

I called my mom downstairs because somebody called on the telephone. I didn't answer it, because last time I was watching the movie *Scream* the actual scream called the girl's house in the movie. Yeow! That freaked me out. I said "What ever, mom! Come down, now."

My mom replied, "Hold on. I'll be there!" She took the phone. I went upstairs. I stayed there for a while, and I was looking for my *vestido*, the one I wore last summer. I went downstairs to ask my mom if she threw it in the basement. By the time I came downstairs it smelled like pizza. I came down and saw what it was. It was pizza-- my favorite. My mom told me after she was finished talking on the phone that I could call Valery to see if she could come over. So my mom was done and I called Valery, but Valery didn't answer, instead a strong sounding guy answered who was talking French. So when I was about to hang up the phone I heard a voice, "Oh hello, who is this? Hi cousin. It's me, Valery."

"Hi. I just heard a French guy talking," I said.

"I know-- that was me."

I laughed and said, "Oh yeah you always trick me on the phone. Remember last time you put a chicken on the phone but then it pooped on your leg so you stopped pretending?"

"Well anyway, why'd you call?" asked Valery. I answered, "Well I called because my mom said that it was ok for you to sleepover."

Valery said, "Ok, I'll probably be there at 8:00."

I said, "Ok, sounds good to me. Oh yeah try to make it here a little early because I'm making a pizza." So I was just about to listen to my music when my mom called me. "*Que?*" I shouted. I went downstairs. "What is it?" I said.

Mom whispered, "Oh nothing."

I said, "Oh my goodness you called me for no reason?"
"No," mom replied, "I did, I was just kidding. Your cousin is in the car getting out her stuff. Go help her, would you?"

"Pero yo no quiero."

"Fine" mom told me. "You're as pleasant as a caring puppy, not!" yelled mom.

I whined, "Fine I'll help her then." I went outside to help my cousin. I helped her with her things and then I asked her why she brought so many bags. She told me her mom is going to visit relatives for two months and she needs to stay at my house. I was so excited, I screamed to my mom. "Mom, Valery's going to stay with us for two whole months!" I asked my mom, "Mom where's Jazmine?" (Jazmine's my older sister.) My mom told me she's upstairs and that Jazmine could share a room with Valery. I knocked on Jazmine's door.

"What is it and who is it?" yelled Jazmine.

I responded, "It's me Emily."

She asked, "What do you want?"

I said, "Ummm...I was wondering if you could share a room with Valery. "It was very quiet, I was thinking of just leaving and saying that Valery could share a room with me. "*Pero yo no quiero*" I thought. I took five steps back away from her door. Then I thought I should let Valery sleep with me even though I have a smaller room than my sister. So then I was just about to take three giant steps away from her room, the door opened.

My sister came out and said, "I'll let her share a room with me." I went downstairs and ate some pizza. My sister stood upstairs. I told my cousin that she's going to be sharing a room with Jazmine. She was ok with that. Then my mom said, "*Tienen cinco minutos para jugar.*" So after we were finished eating we played then we went to sleep. A few hours later I woke up to go to school. Then I woke up because I found myself on the floor by my bed. I got dressed, then my mom took Valery and I to school. I saw my friend Alyssa sitting at the spot where I used to sit. It wasn't just that, everyone's seats had been changed. My desk gave me a clue that Ms. Marie changed our desks around. So I walked up to find my desk. Then I looked in a desk. I found my things. So I got up and looked who sat next to me. It was my friend Jessy Thomson. Well I got up and sat on my seat. Then I was wondering what I should do next so I looked on our schedule. Well anyway I was just about to take out my *libro*. Then Jessy asked me, "How old are you again?"

"I'm 9" I said.

"Oh the same age as I am," he whispered.

Yeah. Then I really did take out my *libro*. I read it. After I was finished I put it back in my class library. Then we went to the lunchroom to eat. Alyssa and I were talking about how much fun we always have. The bell rang. We both got up. Then we both thought of calling our parents so that I could go over to Alyssa's house. So we called my mom. Then we called her mom. Well my mom said, "Sure you could stay over at her house for a while because Valery wants to come over too."

I was so happy. Then fifteen minutes later her mom came. We all went in the car and we sat there and listened to the music. Then her mom told us first that we were going to their grandma's house to pick up Alyssa's sister. So five minutes went by and we were there so we got off and went inside her grandma's house. Alyssa's sisters name is Ashley. She is so cute. She is so little. Well not exactly little. She's six years old. Alyssa and I are nine years old. Valery is older--twelve. That is really cool. We're in third grade! Well, anyway I grabbed Ashley's bag. We all said good bye to their grandma. Then we went in the car and listened to music. It was about ten minutes later. We got off the car and went to their house. When we went in we were watching TV until we got bored so then we played outside. The phone rang. It was for me. My mom was really excited. She said, "We're going to America!"

I was excited too, but also sad. About five minutes later we went home. We went to bed shortly after we got there. The next day we packed and got ready to leave. Then my mom took me to my class to say my good byes. I said good bye to my best friend and my other friends too.

We took a plane. It was delayed so it was morning when we got there. We got off the plane and looked for a spot to live.

<<<Jazmine this doesn't make any sense>>>>

Four days later I got to know around the place and we were already settled and my mom was taking me to a new school. I met these girls. Their names were: Lasbat, Jackie, Tania, Miranda. They were so nice to me. I was thinking, "I'm going to have a good time in this school." I had a great day. When school was finished, my mom picked me up. We went to our new home and we were talking about how our day went. My mom said that she had a good day at her new job. I told her that I had a good day at school and I also talked about what I found to be cool and about the nice girls I met. I told her I wanted to stay here.

Now it is a couple of months later. I am feeling now that I have really gotten the hang of the things in Chicago. School is going really well for me. I'm really hoping that I'll stay there for life. I'm hoping I'll never go back. Well, I will go back to see my cousin and relatives.

Today my mom is taking me to school and it's a beautiful day. After school my mom is going to take me to the park. My mom said, "Emily we're here at your school."

"Oh" I said.

I got out and went to class. Then everybody in my class came to me and said, "Hey Emily, you're late!"

"I am?"

"Yeah!" commented Miranda.

I went to my desk. I sat down and was thinking as I looked for a clear white paper in my journal. My friends telling me I was late makes me feel that I really belong. After a while, I'll go to lunch and sit Miranda, Jackie, Lasbat and Tania. One day I was an outsider, but even after the first day I was welcomed. Day by day and I wasn't considered new anymore. I was just like an American. Once again, I'm really starting to get used to this place. I feel very good. I feel as I still have a connection Mexico, but this is where I belong.

Spanish Glossary

a= to
cinco= five
jugar= play
libro= book
minutos= minutes
pero= bBut
que= what
quiero= want to
tiene= have
tu= you
vestido= dress
yo= I

About the Author

Kayla Nicole Enriquez is a 3rd grade student. She is not an immigrant; her mother and sister aren't either. The name of her school is Passages Charter Elementary School. She is really interested in math and reading. Those are her favorite subjects. She also has a pen pal from Tennessee. She writes to her almost two times a month. Kayla also likes to write in class. She plays soccer. Her team's name is Athletic Field Park. They won four games or more. Some of her teammates are in her same school and class. When she plays soccer with her team she has a chance to play almost every position, such as goalie, forward or defender. If you're a sporty, you'll know the rest.



Cake

By Narmeen Lalani

Today mama told me that I was late for school. Then I remembered that I had to give something to Hira and Neha for *Eid*. I wore my uniform and went off to school. When I reached there I gave Hira and Neha their gifts. When the bell rang I went in my classroom and did my math problems. When I was done I gave my teacher Ms. Nela my math problem. Then my whole class and I together did our math problem. Hira, Neha and I got A's and I was really excited to tell my mom that I passed. Then the lunch bell rang and my teacher said, "*Khana khane. Ka waqt ha.*" Then we all lined up, took our lunch bins and sat at table number *ek*. I sat at the first table with Hira and Neha. Neha brought *daal chawa*. Hira brought *halem* and I had two lunches. The first was *nihari* the second was *biryani*. We all shared what each other brought.

When lunch was over everyone went back into their classrooms and sat at their desks. Ms. Nela asked a hard math question. I gave the right answer and she told me that I had to move to the advanced math level. I was very excited to tell mamma. The bell rang and Ms. Nela passed out our homework. I rushed down the stairs. I left the building and ran home the whole way. When I got home I was breathless. Then mamma asked why I was so out of breath and before I could say anything she told me she was going to have a baby. She told me that before the baby is born our whole family would be going to America. Then I saw something in my papa's hand. It was his lottery visa that would allow him to take us to America. He started filling it out. Then I ran into my room and thought, will there be schools in Chicago, which was where my parents told me

that wanted to live. Later I asked my mama about that. She said of course there are schools and that we would be leaving in three weeks.

Three weeks went by fast. The day before we left for Karachi, I woke up and brushed my teeth. I put on my uniform and ran to school. I told Hira and Neha that my time was up. I would leave for America tomorrow. They were shocked by hearing this. "Why didn't you tell us before?" asked Hira. I didn't know what to say. Both Neha and Hira were upset. I told them that I was innocent and didn't have anything to do with moving. Then the bell rang and I went inside my classroom. Later, when class was over I ran home again. When I reached home the phone rang in our building. It was for me. It was Neha. "I am very, very sorry, Narmeen. Everything today was a mistake. Please forgive me." She was crying. "I forgive you, Neha," I told her. She thanked me and I put the phone down and ran to my mother. I saw she was packing her suitcase. I asked her if she could help me pack, but she said she was too busy. I went to my suitcase and started folding my clothes. I was going to go out to shake my clothes outside. When I opened the door, my dad was there. He dropped his suitcase on the chair. He went to my mom and asked her if she had packed everything. He helped me put the rest of my things in my bag.

The next morning, my papa arranged for a taxi to take us to the Karachi airport. While we were waiting for the taxi I fell asleep since I couldn't sleep the night before. Before I knew it, papa was loading up the taxi with our suitcases and bags. At the airport we waited a long time for the announcement about our plane. We sat in our seats along with the other customers. The plane took off. While we were in the air I went to sleep again. I woke later and asked my mom when we were going to have lunch.

She told me that it would be served in a little while. Shortly, I smelled the food. It seemed like I was always waiting for the plane food to be served. On the final part of the trip to Chicago I looked out the window when we were about to land. I saw that there were a lot of buildings. I listened to the announcement. There were directions about what to do after the plane landed but I couldn't understand. After we got through the customs and picked up our bags, we finally saw mamu, my papa's brother. Mamu came next to me and said, "Narmeen, let's go home."

Then we all went to Mamu's house and it was beautiful. I couldn't believe my eyes. I asked my mamu if we're going to live in the house and mamu said yes and I was very excited. At night I went to sleep and when I woke up I asked my mom when I was going to school and she said that I am going the next day. I asked mamu if he could teach me how to speak and write English. Then I heard someone coming in the door and mamu opened the door. It was mami and my cousin. Mami came to me and hugged me and then mama came out of the kitchen and mami hugged mama. Everybody was happy and everybody sat at the table and ate lunch and watched TV. After that we ate dinner and went to sleep. When I woke up I wore my uniform and ate breakfast and my mom was crying and I asked her why. She said that she was crying because she missed Pakistan. I wiped her tears and told her that I miss Pakistan too. Then mom was relaxed and reminded me that today is my birthday. Mami came downstairs and said that mamu will come home in a few minutes. I told mami that today is my birthday and then mami called mamu and told him that when I come home he should have a cake. I went upstairs and went to my cousin's room and I saw that he was playing a game and I went by him and told him that today's my birthday and that later we would eat cake. Mami came upstairs and told us

that Mamo was waiting in the car, so I took my backpack and sat in the car.

When I reached school I went in my classroom and told my teacher that today it's my birthday. The teacher put a sign that says birthday and everyone wondered whose birthday it was. I sat at my desk and did writing, and then the teacher said that everyone should do reading and then I started doing reading. Then the teacher rang the bell and said that it is time to go to art. When art class ended everyone went to class and read and did some writing and the teacher laid out puzzles and rang the bell. It was time to eat, everyone lined up and ate lunch and played. It was confusing so I just tried to follow what everyone else did. Then everyone read books and we all did math and went to the park. When we got back from the park we celebrated my birthday and I ate my cake and made a wish that I would learn English very well. Then my cousin went back to class and I was very lucky to meet new friends and then it was time to leave. I was excited by all the new things but I still missed Hira and Neha.

Back at home, I went downstairs and met my mami and I told her how my day was and I went home and then mamo came home with a very big cake. I told mamo that I was very hungry and then finally I ate the cake. After that everyone watched *King Kong* and played games and drank Pepsi. Mamo took everyone out to see the lights and there were fireworks in Navy Pier. On our way home I fell asleep and then my mom woke me up and laid me in bed.

About the Author

Narmeen Lalani loves to read and spend time with her family. She feels sad about immigration today because people will miss their families if they are deported back to their old country. She wants for all immigrants to be able to stay in America if they choose. She also likes to play soccer and board games with her friends.



Raju and I Immigrated

By Noorani Pirani

7-8-1999

Dear Diary,

Five more months until it is my birthday! My friend Raju exclaimed that he is immigrating on my birthday! I'm really sad about the idea of him leaving. I don't know for sure why he's immigrating but I'm going to find out.

7-9-1999

Dear Diary,

I thought he might just want to see what a new place might be like or maybe he has to move because his family is moving. Oh yeah, he told me he was going to Chicago. *Maconahpatahah* (I don't know) if I could go with him when it is my birthday. That would be like a big birthday present! I asked my mom and dad. They each said, "I do not know!"

7-10-1999

I was begging my mom this morning but she still said, "*Maconahpatahah!*" I went to school and asked Raju why he was going to Chicago. He said that his whole family is moving there to be closer to his uncle. I was partially right!

7-11-1999

Dear Diary,

I was begging my mom at my bed time last night! I think I was wearing her down because she finally said, "Okay!" When I went to school today I told Raju that I could come along with his family too but that we would have to work things out! He said, "That is awesome!" I can't wait to pack my stuff. Raju is so excited too. I'm crazy about this!

7-31-1999

Dear Diary,

It's the last day of July. Four more months until my birthday! I wish I could speed up the time. My present will be that I am going to Chicago. My parents have worked out everything with Raju's family. I just have to get my visa.

8-5-1999

Dear Diary,

I was *acha* like a baby clam.

8-6-1999

Dear Diary,

I ate a *samosa* for dinner. It was very good. "*Maco abe in three months ma gana.*" I said. "*Kyd?*" my mom said. "I want to see what Chicago is like." I said. "*Abe 4 months ma giga!*" I was sad. *Ma royata.*

8-13-1999

I was flying my kite in an empty lot. It was 30 degrees and it was pleasant. I was eating *daal chavel.*

8-15-1999

I was measuring myself. I am almost one and a half meters tall and I'm only in 3rd grade! I was skate boarding at the half pipe. I saw Raju. He yelled that he was happy that it is almost time for the trip and that I did some nice skate boarding. I told my mom and dad that *mana Raju daca* and *bola ma* good skate board *carata*.

8-20-1999

Dear Diary,

It was 38 degrees in Karachi today. It was very hot outside and inside. I tried to cool off. I rode my bike for a long time on the streets and alleys and down to the beach.

8-30-1999

Dear Diary,

It's almost the last day of August. I went over to meet Raju but he wasn't home so I left a message. I stopped over later and he was home. We went bike riding and then skate boarding.

8-31-1999

Dear Diary,

I was another hot day. It was 39 degrees today. I went bike riding with my hat and my new sunglasses.

9-2-1999

Just a few months left. I saw Raju today at the market. I said, "I'm going to ride my bike at the half pipe today. Do you want to

come?" He said, "Yeah!" I showed him by extreme moves, which were dangerous. "That was fantastic!" he said.

10-7-1999

I haven't been writing much lately. I don't like waiting. Just a couple of months until my trip. I've been lying in bed and feeling bored. I'm really bored. I even made up a song about being bored to entertain myself. It goes: *I'm bored, really bored. Always bored. Yes, I'm so bored.* I had to slap myself to get the song out of my head! I decided to watch a movie called Ben 10. It was pretty awesome.

10-20-1999

Dear Diary,
I drank a lot of mango juice and sodas and then ate candy, popcorn and chips. Now I'm feeling really hyper. I feel like super crazy.

11-10-1999

Dear Diary,
I was 20 degrees. It's cooling off. My hands felt cold like an otter.

12-1-1999

Dear Diary,

Finally, tomorrow we are leaving for Chicago. I packed my bags and Raju packed his. He had more since he is moving. It will be

strange when I come back to Pakistan in two weeks and he stays in Chicago.

12-2-1999

Today is the day! We went to the airport with our tickets. I am writing while I'm on the plane. It is really cool.

12-4-1999

It took two days but we're finally here in Chicago. Wow. Chicago looks awesome!

Then mother began to speak out in a small regular voice, "Sorry I told her; it just slipped out."

After that I went upstairs and went to my room. It was time to get ready for the big party. Just before I reached my closet my mom called me. I told her I would be right there. Maybe I'll pick out an outfit later. I came running down the stairs. "Yes mom what is it?" I asked.

"You have a letter from your pen pal in America," mother replied.

"Yeah, give it to me! I'm so excited," I yelled extremely frantic. I had waited so very long and now it was here. I couldn't wait to read it. The letter was short. My pen pal read my letters even though my English writing isn't as good as hers. We're the same age, but it seems like two 15 year old girls like us would be busy doing something else. She lives in Chicago. Her letter had some exciting news. Her name is Tina. The letter said,

Dear Kristina,

I have a feeling you should sit on middle of your bed if you are on it. My mom is coming to Paris to have her book edited by your mom."

From Tina

"Ouch!" I shouted. I should've followed the directions that Tina wrote. "Mom!" I called, "are you having a new author's book to edit?"

Mother answered, "Yes, how did you know?"

Now I think I need some ice. I fell off the bed when I read the news. I was standing at the top of the stairs. Mother said, "I see your face turning blue. Come downstairs in the kitchen."

"I'll be right down," I said.

"Yum, what is that delightful smell? Is father cooking the food already?" *Now my head feels a lot better!!!* I ran and ran through the long hallway all the way to the backyard.

I was going crazy!!!

"Are you making your famous barbeque ribs?" I asked.

"Um, no just the sauce for it. That's all... no worries."

"Well, if you don't mind..."

"-yes Kristina, you can have a sample."

"I guess I don't need to complete my sentence now."

"Goodness, what am I going to do with her?" father laughed.

"Maybe I should stop making good food. Maybe mother should cook."

"I heard that, but for now I will forget it!" mother yelled from the kitchen.

Father replied, "Good solution. How about we forget and by forget I mean forget *absolutely* everything. Just clear your mind of me saying your cooking is terrible."

"Well I'll just go to the mall with mom and my friends." Lisa and Melissa were at the door. Minutes later we all left with mom in the car. We all need to get new outfits for the party. Melissa kept repeating completely too much about what she needed. New earrings, a new skirt, and she just had to include what color and all. Out of us three friends, Melissa was the most talkative. Lisa had something to say also but not as much as Melissa.

When we arrived at the mall there was an unexpected shoe sale. I saw the perfect of heels. There were very appropriate. They were a little tall but okay for the party. "Watch out, pardon me please," I said.

Yes, I got the shoes now I just need to see how much they cost. Daddy gave me thirty dollars. These shoes are only \$25. "Bonjour! Bonjour, sir, over here! Merci, thank you! Are these shoes \$25 or not?"

"Oui, oui. That is how much they are exactly."

"Merci sir. Merci. You were a big help. But now can you just show me where to buy them?"

"Sure thing!" replied the salesman.

"I don't know where Melissa went." I said to Lisa.

"She's probably at the new candy store getting junk." Lisa told me.

"The last time we saw her she was talking to us about an outfit she found." I said.

"You two should feel shameful for talking behind my back."
Melissa said. Melissa filled us with shame of disrespecting her.

"I'm sorry Melissa." I apologized. "You know I'm sorry, but Ms. Ha-Ha-Snort over here is laughing her head off.

"I'm so sorry Melissa. It's just that lady over there!" Lisa giggled, and then fell to the floor.

Melissa forced and pulled Lisa up.

I saw my mom coming toward us. Lisa calmed herself down and finally got up just in time.

"Kristina? Is that you? I thought I recognized you."

"Yes. I recognize you too. You said you were coming to Paris but I didn't think it would be this soon, and here by coincidence!" I replied.

"Aren't you going to introduce us?" asked Melissa in a jealous voice.

"This is my pen pal, Tina, from Chicago in America. Tina, this is Melissa, Lisa and my mom."

Everyone introduced themselves, including our moms. We left the mall and headed for home. We saw smoke coming from what I thought was the backyard. The house was in flames. The party was a disaster.

Susan, (Tina's mom) insisted that we come with them to Chicago the next day. Our moms would work on their book project and we would stay with them until father fixed up the house.

Epilogue

Father couldn't finish the house quickly so Kristina started high school in Chicago with Tina. She quickly learned English better than she knew before. Eventually Kristina and her family loved Chicago so much that they decided to stay. Her father opened up a French restaurant.

About the Author

Mia Coleman is a third grade who loves to write. She is not an immigrant but she wanted to write an immigrant story. She lives with her mom who also loved to write poetry when she was a child. Mia's favorite hobby is art and she has pictures she drew all over her bedroom walls. She enjoys watching basketball.

