

THE CHANGE AGENT

Adult Education for
Social Justice: News,
Issues, and Ideas

TALES OF RESILIENCE

Dropping Out to Take Care of my Family: 3
I Am Who I Am Because: 4
To Gain Resilience Will Hurt: 5
How Did You Get Here? 6
My Baby Girl: 7
I Walked Out a Warrior: 8-9
Broken But Not Defeated: 10-11
Hard-Wired to Bounce Back: 12-13
Started Out Feeling Defeated: 14
My Brother Believed in Me: 15
It's Not the What, It's the How: 16-17
What I Learned from My Challenges: 18
During a Storm, Vermonters Learn: 19
Creating Resilience Circles: 20-21
Listen! 22-23
We Are Change: 24-25
Participatory Budgeting: 26
Downsized After 22 Years: 27
The Long Road to Success: 28
Battle Against Myself: 29
The Kids Are Watching: 30-31
Living with HIV: 32-33
We Don't Quit: 34-35
Doing Time: 36-37
Drawing Inspiration from Art: 38-39
Love Never Fails: 40-41
Heroes Among Us: 42-43
Resilience Means Bounce Back: 44
Dare to Do What You Fear: 45
The Earthquake in Haiti: 46
Two Stories of Surviving Fire: 47
Robbers and Cops: 48
"Be as Big as You Dream": 49
Such a Heavy Load: 50-51
Learning to Read at Age 59: 52-53
Resources: 54-55



Taywana "Mother Earth" James. Read her full story on p. 22.

“I didn’t have the opportunity to read a book, so I had to read the environment. No one watched me, so I had to watch everything else. I didn’t have the tools I needed to make a life for myself, but that motivated me to find the tools.”

The Change Agent is the biannual publication of The New England Literacy Resource Center. Each issue of the paper helps teachers incorporate social justice content into their curriculum. The paper is designed for intermediate-level ESOL, ABE, GED, and adult diploma classes. Each issue focuses on a different topic that is relevant to learners' lives.

In New England, *The Change Agent* is available free of charge in limited quantities through NELRC's affiliated state literacy resource centers (SABES, CREC, Vermont Department of Education, Literacy Resources/RI and RI PD Center, New Hampshire Department of Education, and Maine Adult Education). Contact these centers to learn how to receive your free copies. PDF versions of *The Change Agent* can be downloaded from our Website.

Submissions. Our next issue is tentatively titled "Good Jobs, Not Just Any Jobs." See the "Call for Articles" on the back cover. We welcome submissions from teachers and students as well as activists and thinkers from outside the field. For submission guidelines visit <www.nelrc.org/changeagent> or contact us at 617-482-9485 or changeagent@worlded.org.

Subscriptions

A one-year subscription (2 issues) is \$10. A two-year sub. costs \$18. *The Change Agent* is also available in bulk sets (25 copies, twice a year) for \$75. See the back cover and/or our website for details.

Editor: Cynthia Peters

Proofreaders: Andy Nash, Leah Peterson, Carey Reid, Priyanka Sharma, Sally Waldron, and Lou Wollrab.

The Change Agent is published by the New England Literacy Resource Center/World Education
44 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210
(617) 482-9485
www.nelrc.org/changeagent

No information in this magazine is intended to reflect an endorsement for, or opposition to, any candidate or political party.



From the Editor

In this issue, students and adult education allies have written eloquently about the idea of resilience, sharing stories of individual and community courage that will inspire you, inform you, and no doubt change your life. These essays and poems provide moving, real-life narratives that form the context for improving reading, writing, math, and critical thinking skills.

Most importantly, let these stories evoke in you your *own* powerful ability to bounce back after a setback. Let them show you how you can nurture resilience in yourself and in your community. And finally, let them remind you of some of the ways we could address inequality and injustice so that so many people don't have to call upon resilience reserves just to cope with a chronically uneven playing field.

New with this Issue—Article Leveling and a FREE WEBINAR

If you are a teacher, be on the lookout for a free webinar on how to use this issue of *The Change Agent* in the classroom—coming up in October! To aid in your teaching, visit our website and download a Table of Contents that lists the reading level of each of the articles.

Some Articles are Available in Audio

Listen to articles read out loud while you follow along with the text. Notice also that there are many "extras" on our website to supplement this issue. If you're not a subscriber, now's a good time to remedy that! Visit <www.nelrc.org/changeagent>.

A Lesson Plan on Writing with Resilience

We know the topic of resilience will resonate with your students, so let them tell their own story, using the "Writing with Resilience" lesson plan, which you can find at <www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras>.

Meet the Editorial Board



Standing from left to right: Cynthia Zafft, World Education; Anna Fernandez-Buehrens, Notre Dame Educational Center; Deeqo Jibril, Somali Women's Organization; Morrigan Philips, Survival, Inc.; Sarah Byrnes, Resiliency Circles; Carolyn Lomax, City Life/Vida Urbana. Sitting from left to right: Andy Nash, NELRC; Ricky Silvestre, Bunker Hill Community College; and Cynthia Peters, editor of The Change Agent.

Thanks to the Nellie Mae Foundation for their generous support of this issue.



Dropping Out to Take Care of My Family

Marco Albarran

Something that set me back in life was the death of my father when I was 17 years old. When my dad died, I had to start working. I tried to stay in school, but my mom wasn't making enough money. I dropped out of school so that I could work more and help my mom.

I have two younger sisters. I felt responsible for them. I helped them finish their studies. I supported them economically and emotionally. My mom and I provided for our family. Our family experienced a big change when my dad passed away, but I played a role in helping our family survive. Being part of this change made me a stronger, smarter person.

Now I have the opportunity to finish school. I feel proud. I am showing my son the importance of school. My mom and sisters are happy for me and proud of me. They are supporting me.



Marco Albarran is a student at North Kansas City Schools Adult Education and Literacy in Kansas City, MO. He is originally from Aca-pulco, Mexico. He has been working in the restaurant industry for 17 years. His goal is to complete his GED and start his own business. He came to the U.S. 10 years ago looking for better opportunities for his son.

Re-Thinking Labels

HELLO

I am a

High School Drop-Out

HELLO

I am a

Family Care-Taker and
Income-Earner

What labels have you had? Write down some alternative labels that could apply to you. (The labels above could describe the author. Do labels make a difference? Why or why not?)

I Am Who I Am Because...

A.A.

I am who I am because I am rebellious. I believed in my dream to be someone, even when my mother and my husband didn't want this for me.

When I was a little girl my mother told me, "Don't go to school because you don't need school to eat everyday. If you want to eat everyday, go to learn how to make bread, candy, dresses, cheese, cigarettes, or other things!"

But I didn't listen to her. I went to school at night, even while my mother said no. Every night I escaped my home to go to school. My mother waited for me outside and yelled at me. Sometimes she hid my shoes and my dress so I couldn't

**I didn't listen to her.
I went to school at
night, even while my
mother said no.**

go to school. She said, "You're only going to school to find a boyfriend." She even forced me to wear old dresses with patches and holes so boys

wouldn't look at me, but I went to school anyway.

When I finished my school, I was very happy. I asked my mother, "Do you want to see my certificate?" She said, "Okay, but now you have to learn how to sew dresses or make something."

But I didn't learn how to sew dresses; I learned how to make jeans.

After I got married, I started to have the same problems with my husband. He didn't want me

to go to school because he said we only needed to work. He said the same thing that my mother said: "You are only going to school to find

another man." I was

working, but I felt sad because I didn't understand English at my job. My daughters were not patient and did not want to teach me English.

I was rebellious again. I quit my job, and I decided to go back to school. First, I went to school to learn English. Then I wanted to learn sign language. Now I continue to learn English and I want to learn Mandarin too.

I am proud of myself because I'm a nurse's aide. I sew dresses and pants. I know Spanish, English, and Sign Language. I am an important person. And after studying hard I even understand when my youngest daughter says something rude.

Now I live with my second husband and he supports me and pushes me to go to school to learn English. He always tells me, "You can do it!" He helps me with everything and he supports me to learn other languages too. He bought a guitar and a saxophone for me because it is my dream to play these instruments.

I will never leave school again. I am proud of myself for everything that I have done. Being rebellious is part of who I am. My mother and my ex-husband didn't want me to follow my dreams. But I didn't listen to them, and now I'm on the right path. I am working towards all of my goals.



...I am rebellious.

What do You Think?

How did being a rebel affect the author?

Share some of the ways you have been a rebel in your life.

Share some of the ways you would like to be a rebel.

A.A. is a student at the Notre Dame Educational Center in South Boston, MA. She was born in El Salvador and came to the U.S. in 1979. She has raised 5 children and lives now with her youngest daughter and new husband. She wishes to remain anonymous.

To Gain Resilience Will Hurt Sometimes

Carl Polito

In 1990, I experienced a large setback when my father passed away. I was only nine years old when he died; this was a difficult time in my life. I didn't want to be with anyone including my friends, classmates, and even family. The only thing I wanted was not possible; I wanted my father back.

I tried running away from everyone and everything. The only person I couldn't shake off was my older brother. He was two years older than me but we were very close to each other. He always told me that there would always be things that will set you back. He said they might be little things or they might be big things. If you work through them, you will become more resilient

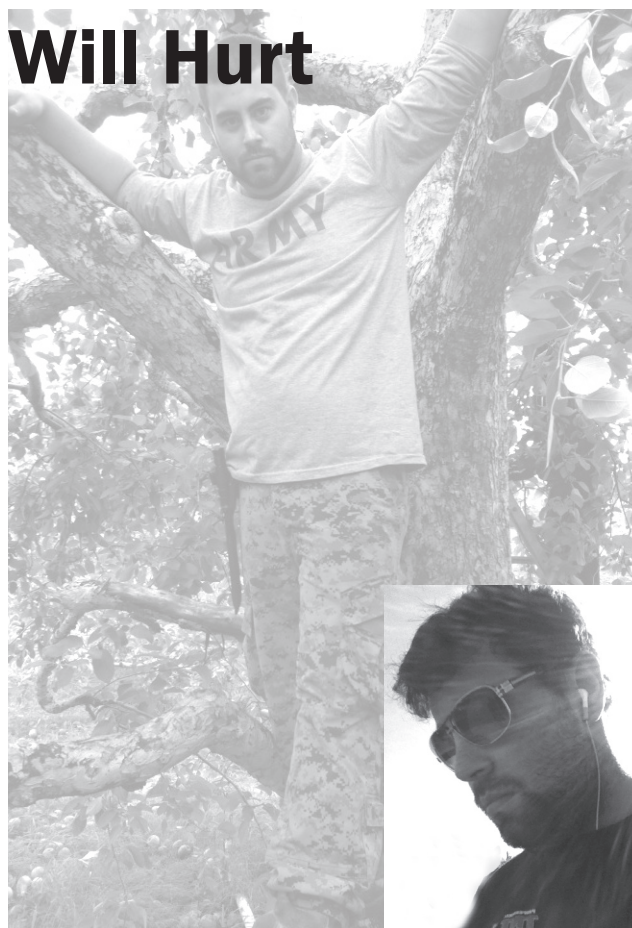
from the experience. He told me that time moves on, so live your life to its fullest and don't stop. I will never forget the wisdom he shared with me back then, allowing me to move forward towards living again.

My brother died last year; he was hit by a drunk driver. I had just spoken to him about two hours before the devastating moment. My life

Your Turn!

What stood out for you in this story?

What words of wisdom have helped you in your life? Write them here:



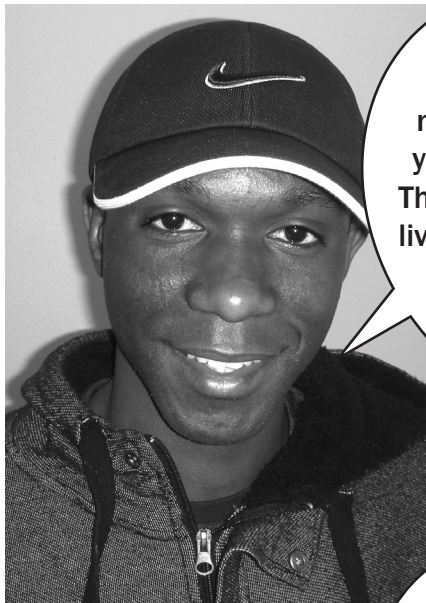
blew up in front of me when he died. I don't think that I would have been able to work through this second loss without remembering those conversations my brother and I had when my father died. The resilience I gained from my father's passing and my brother's support made me much stronger for my family when my brother died. I was able to be there and support them, and I was not as afraid of the whole ordeal as I was when I lost my father.

Challenges come at you in different ways, some small and some big. From experience, you become wiser and you are better able to cope. I conclude that resilience is different for everyone and the way you go through it is special to you.

Carl Polito is from Norwood, MA. He takes classes at Blue Hills Regional Technical School in Massachusetts. His goal is to get his GED and then study information technology in college. He hopes his writing helps others.

How Did You Get Here?

My Mother! My Friends! My Son!



My mother said, “Even if you might die tomorrow, you should do good.” That is how my mother lives her life. She is my role model.

—Mackenson Joseph
Jewish Vocational Services



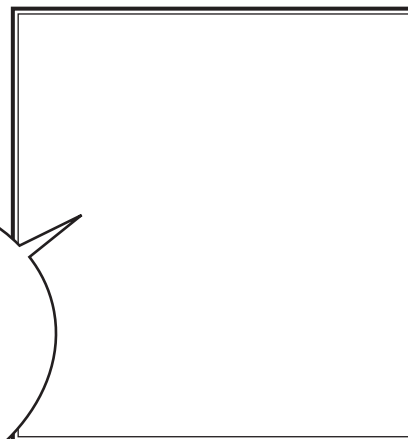
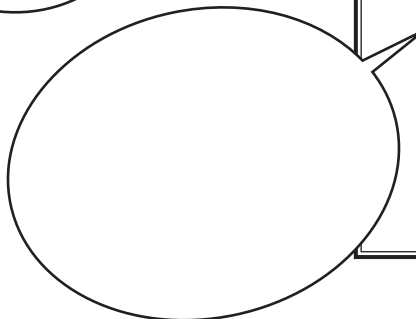
My son!
He is what motivates me. He keeps me going. I want to be a role model to him.

—Melissa Ayala
Crittenton Women’s Union



My friends help me stay on track. When I feel down, they let me know I can do it.

—Tamara Saintsaurin
Crittenton Women’s Union



What about you?

Thinking about College?

These quotes were gathered at “College for a Day,” a program set up by the National College Transition Network <collegetransition.org>. Students visited Cambridge College to learn about the admissions process and to sample the college’s offerings in a variety of mini-classes.

My Baby Girl

Kerri Allcock

I'll try to describe her, but where to begin?
 Her beauty is seen, also felt within.
 She shows me the sun when all I feel is the rain.
 When she wraps those little arms around me, I feel
 no pain.
 She has no idea the happiness she brings.
 She's my perfect angel—without wings.
 Her smile is adorable; she's full of grace.
 She reminds me this world is a beautiful place.
 Her hands, so soft and small.
 When they're holding mine is the best gift of all.
 She knows how to speak to me without making a sound.
 A piece of my heart is missing when she's not around.
 Her face is perfect. Her heart is pure.
 She'll take on the world; she has no fear.
 Her blonde hair, those big blue eyes.
 She holds on to my heart with invisible ties.
 Her laugh is addictive, so delightful and sweet.
 As she dances around with little bare feet.
 My world is at peace; she shows me the light.
 Watching her calmly sleep, I know everything will be all right.
 As clever and funny as she is smart.
 She's my beautiful daughter, my mind, my soul, and my heart.



Kerri Allcock is a graduate of Claremont Adult Learning Center and resides in Claremont, NH. She is a single mother of two girls. She worked full time during the day while she finished her high school diploma at night. Her plans are to continue on in higher education so that she can sustain her family at a more livable wage.

Issue EXTRA!

Read “My Mom Always Stands by Me” by Miguel Morales, a story of a mother’s support of her son through many trials and tribulations. See <www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras>.

I Walked Out a Warrior

Carolyn Lomax

Downward Spiral

I am a self-employed hair stylist. In 2009, times were hard for everyone. I was losing income because my clients were low on income too. Because of the economic crisis, the value of my home had plummeted. But I was still paying inflated

I was in a downward spiral. I didn't know if I would be bankrupt or homeless or both.

mortgage payments. I owed the bank more than twice as much as the real worth of the house. Many of us in my neighborhood were fighting to keep our homes. And then I lost one of my colleagues in a violent death. I felt

like I was in a downward spiral. I didn't know if I would be bankrupt or homeless or both.

Finding Help

I found out about City Life/Vida Urbana, an organization that fights for housing justice. They invited me to their Tuesday night meetings. At first, I thought, "I don't have time for another anything, especially another meeting!" I am a mother of ten, step-mother of six, and grandmother of eighteen. Two of my children have a disability, and someone wants

me to add something new to my plate!?! But I decided the least I could do was attend one meeting.

When I arrived, I entered the room along with eight of my children. The room was filled; the hallway was packed. As I was trying to monitor the children, someone approached me. She said, "You can leave the children with me. We have other children and if you don't mind they can have pizza and juice while you listen in on the meeting." Caught off guard, I thought, "Someone wants to help with my children, and *this many*?" I released the children to the care of City Life supporting staff.

I found a seat and I noticed the friendly, family-like atmosphere. I heard stories of people

who were going through the same things I was. People introduced themselves, some crying, some scared and defeated. After each introduction, someone from City Life asked, "Are you willing to fight for your home?" And if the person answered yes, the whole room shouted back, "Then we'll fight with you."



The author (center) with two of her children at a protest in Boston, 2012.



Photo by Rebeca Oliveira, Jamaica Plain Gazette. Reprinted with permission. City Life/Vida Urbana protesters picket during an attempted eviction at Heather Gordon's home in Jamaica Plain.

Fighting for Myself and Others

On my first visit, I received exactly what I needed. First, I found a supportive group of people who would help me fight for my home. Second, I learned that even if you are facing foreclosure, you can still fight being evicted. And third, I found a community of people who not only supported me, but whom I could support as well. Since I have been a member of City Life, I have helped block people's evictions and I have worked to change housing laws so that they keep our communities intact. I am not just in a private struggle to save my home. I am in a much larger struggle for housing justice.

I began to feel less despair. I had walked in to that meeting feeling overwhelmed — so many tasks expected of me, so many children who depend on me — and feeling worried I would lose my home and let my family down. I thought I was too busy to go to a meeting, but City Life turned out to be my life preserver. They reactivated the activist in me and helped me realize I could fight back. I see my problems in the larger context. The economic crisis happened because of the greed of the big banks. It was not my fault! Understanding that took away my feelings of defeat and shame.

It is July 2012, I am still in my home, I still have my “underwater” mortgage, and I’m still trying to get the bank to negotiate with me to reduce the principal on my mortgage. But now I have the power of the people of City Life on my side. I am not alone.

Every Tuesday, I try my best to be present at the meeting. I learn about what others are going through, and I volunteer to help. Thanks to City Life for throwing me a lifeline of love and becoming my extended family. I walked in worried, and I walked out a warrior.

Thanks to City Life for throwing me a lifeline. I walked in worried, and I walked out a warrior.

Carolyn Lomax lives in Boston, MA. She is a member of City Life/ Vida Urbana <www.clvu.org>. Watch a 17-minute video about their work here: <www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/12182009/watch2.html>.

Underwater Mortgage?



A mortgage is underwater when the homeowner owes more on the loan than the home is worth. In 2009, more than 15.2 million mortgages—32.2% of all U.S. mortgages—were underwater. The states with the highest percentages of underwater mortgages are shown above.

What do you think? If the homeowner could afford monthly payments on the real value but is having trouble paying the inflated value, should the bank re-sell the home to the owner at the market price? Or should the bank evict the owner and sell it to someone else at market price?

Source: < www.gobankingrates.com > 8-25-09.

Broken But Not Defeated

Judy Harrington

"We will be closing the doors on this division of the Whirlpool Corporation by mid-year of 2012." This was the announcement last October that sent my life reeling out of control. It plunged me head-long into sheer panic, which then led to mind-numbing denial. "This can't be happening," I thought. But indeed it was.

For practically all my life, I've done nothing but build refrigerators. Since I graduated from high school 39 years ago, I've never really known a lifestyle other than factory work. However, Whirlpool's corporate CEOs have made the decision to close down the U.S. factories and relocate in Mexico.

Fortunately, I have had some life experiences and struggles that have taught me about endurance. One of my most important discoveries came after a decision I made on a mountaintop two and a half years ago. I lay there shivering and plotting my escape route. More than once, I wanted to give up. I came close to passing out. But I knew if I did, that would be the end of me. No one would find me among the briers and small ledges where I lay.

The Mountain

Yes, it seemed rational to go hiking that day with only my camera for a companion. I did that often when I was seeking a quiet refuge. I counted on the camera's lens to distract me from my anguish, and on this day, my grief for the loss of both my parents.

My brother laughed at my impulsive decision to hike to the overhanging cliff we nicknamed



Judy Harrington building refrigerators...

"Cave Rock." As kids, we had spent many hours there. Sometimes Mom or Dad joined us for peanut butter and jelly picnics. What wonderful memories awaited me beneath the protective shadows of the overhang!

My short hike wound along a county road for a half mile, then turned sharply up a wooded hillside. It took forty-five minutes to navigate around the brier thickets and ledges to reach the topside of the ridge where we once picnicked.

Lounging on a rock near the fire pit, I reminisced about how many marshmallows

it had burnt, and the number of hotdogs it had roasted during its existence. I marveled at how little the shelter had changed over the years and gave thanks to an ancient Barbie doll, who had remained behind to be its housekeeper. I found a renewal of spirit lingering inside the stone fortress that lifted my gloom. Several snapshots later, I began my trek homeward.

The Accident

I'd not traveled far before I met the ledge that would lead to catastrophe. I knew the ledge would be slippery due to the incline and the dampness under the autumn leaves. I considered my options: go through thick briers on either side or re-climb the hillside behind me and look for an easier way. I opted to brace my right foot on the ledge and step down with my left.

Thus began my life lesson. My left foot slid, and gravity pulled my body weight behind it.

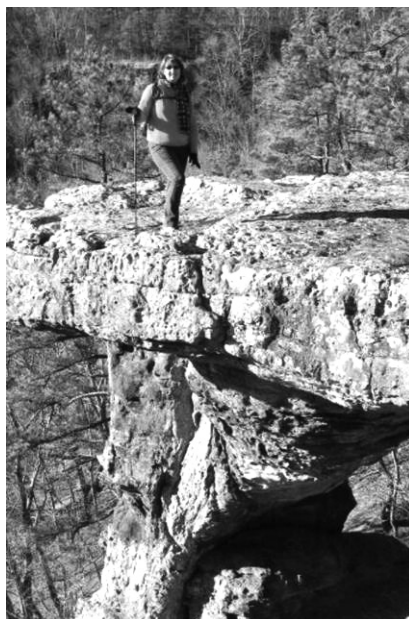
My right foot locked in place, a numbing sensation shot through my ankle, and I found myself seated on the ledge staring at the awkward position of my right foot.

The Decision

I didn't know if it was badly strained or broken. But I knew I wasn't walking down the mountain. This is when I made my decision: I would get myself down the mountain. I would not give up until I found help. I rolled onto my left hip and began the slow process of pulling forward with my heel and pushing downward with my elbow.

I disciplined myself to keep moving like an inchworm, stopping to rest when I couldn't tolerate the struggle any longer.

After two hours, I encountered my next obstacle. The clearing was overgrown with wild grass.



...and hiking in the mountains.

I couldn't wait there for help. If I passed out, no one would see me. I was chilled and shivering from the damp ground. Also, I was probably closer to going into shock than I wanted to admit. I had to remain awake and get myself to the road. So, I crawled on hands and knees over gravel and briars toward the road.

While I lay there summoning my last ounce of strength, I heard the sound of an approaching car. I sat quickly, waved my arms, and screamed for help. The car passed me, then backed up.

More Mountains

I had broken two bones in my foot and two in my leg. The surgeons

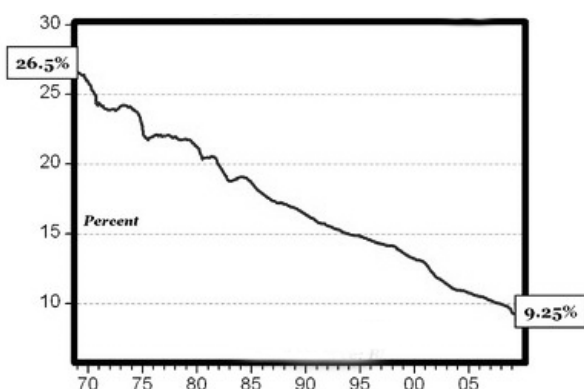
reconstructed me with a long pin across my foot and a titanium plate with nine screws to rebuild my ankle. But more importantly, my self-image underwent a major reconstruction as well! I realized that I can accomplish whatever I am forced to face. I no longer doubt that I have the resilience to succeed.

My current enrollment in adult education is just one more mountain trail to be mastered before I enter college this fall. At first I thought it was impossible to do anything other than build refrigerators, but now I'm training for a new career. I find myself saying, "Bring on the mountain, I'm prepared for this hike!" I've resolved to face this challenge, crawling every inch until I achieve success. I absolutely refuse to lie on the hillside and accept the failure option.

Judy Harrington is currently a student at Fort Smith Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR. She plans to attend UAFS (University of Arkansas, Fort Smith) in the fall to pursue a career in Medical Billing and Coding, coupled with a Business Administration degree.



**Manufacturing Jobs as % of U.S. Total
January 1969 to March 2009**



Write a true statement summarizing the information you see in the graph.

Discuss why these changes have happened.

Source: The Bureau of Labor Statistics <bls.gov>.

Hard-Wired to Bounce Back

A National Expert on Resiliency Shares 4 Protective Factors

Nan Henderson

hard-wired

1. To connect by electrical wires or cables
2. To put into effect by physiological or neurological mechanisms; make automatic or innate

Have you ever felt so badly about something that you thought you could never recover? And then, over time, did you notice that you did heal and begin to bounce back? It turns out that we humans may be hard-wired to bounce back from adversity. Research shows that people have an innate “self-righting” ability. In my work as a resiliency trainer, I have learned a lot about how to support this ability—so that individuals, families, and communities are better able to bounce back after suffering a setback.

Here are four basic approaches that support the development of “protective factors” so that more people will find it easier to recover from crisis, stress, and trauma.

1. Communicate “The Resiliency Attitude”

The first protective strategy is communicating the attitude, “You have what it takes to get through



Danielle Thomas’s brother reminded her, “You can do it!” (see p. 15).

this!” I interviewed a young man who had lived a painful life full of loss and abuse. Most of his adolescence was spent in one foster home after another. He told me that what helped him the most in attaining his own resilient outcome were the people along the way that told him, “What is right with you is more powerful than anything that is wrong.”



Juan Berenguer discusses what it means to bounce back (p. 44).

2. Adopt a “Strengths Perspective”

A school counselor told me recently how she applied this approach. A high school student was referred to the counselor because the girl was failing two subjects, math and science. Normally, the counselor would immediately confront the student with the problem—in this case two failing grades. Instead, she opened her session with this question: “Sandy, I have learned a little about your life. Tell me, how have you managed to do as well as you have done?” Sandy immediately burst into tears. “Never in all my years has anyone acknowledged what it has taken just to get to school,” she said. Most of the rest of the session was spent identifying all the strengths and supports Sandy had used to “do as well as she had done.” Toward the end of the session, the counselor said, “Let’s talk about how you can use all these things to bring your grades up in math and science.”



Marco Albarran—not a “drop-out” but a “family caretaker” (p. 3).

3. Surround Each Person—as well as Families and Organizations—with all Elements of “The Resiliency Wheel”

The Resiliency Wheel is a synthesis of the environmental protective conditions that research indicates everyone can benefit from having in their lives. These six elements of protection are also extremely useful in assisting families and even organizations to bounce back from adversity.

- **Provide Care and Support.** Often simply providing a good listening ear is extremely resiliency-building. So is uplifting music, time in nature, or reading an inspiring book. Pro-

viding oneself and others with unconditional love and encouragement is the most powerful external resiliency-builder.

- **Set High, but Realistic, Expectations for Success.** Effectively using this strategy involves identifying and supporting steps in the right direction rather than demanding instant perfection. One middle school changed its “Honor Roll” program to an “On A Roll” program. In order to be recognized as “on a roll,” students needed to show improvement.
- **Provide Opportunities for “Meaningful Contribution” to Others.** Paradoxically, one of the best ways to bounce back from personal problems is to help someone else with theirs. A foster parent once told me that giving the boys in his care the opportunity to serve disabled vets at the local community veterans’ center did more for the boys than any other strategy. Suddenly, these boys were in a new, and very healing, role. They were now *resources*, rather than *problems*. This strategy, he said, was life-changing.
- **Increase Positive Bonds and Connections.** People who are positively bonded to other people (through a network of friends, family, and organizations) and who share enjoyable activities do better in life.
- **Set and Keep Clear Boundaries.** Feeling safe, knowing what to expect, and not being overwhelmed also builds resiliency. This means developing or encouraging in others the ability to say “no” appropriately, to stand up for oneself when necessary, and to provide whatever means are needed to feel a sense of safety.



Carolyn Lomax gained strength to fight her own eviction by helping others fight theirs (p. 8).



Learn about “resiliency circles” and how they can reduce isolation (p. 20).

- **Develop Life Skills.** When encountering new adversity, try asking, “What life skills that I already have can I use here?” or “What new life skills do I need to learn?”



Terry Terflinger’s work ethic helped him when he started learning to read at the age of 59 (p. 52).

4. Give It Time

A resilient outcome requires patience. A few years ago, I interviewed Leslie, a young woman who had just finished the ninth grade on her fourth try! I asked Leslie how she was able to finally complete ninth grade. Leslie shared with me the two main reasons why she had made it: First, her single-parent mom, who refused to give up on her, even during the years she was skipping school, using drugs, and lying. Secondly, the small alternative school her mother had eventually found for her that embodied the four strategies outlined here.

“Where would Leslie be if she hadn’t had at least one person who stuck with her until she finally got through ninth grade?” I thought. Stories like this one have convinced me not to give up—on myself or on my friends and family who are going through hard times.

Some resiliency researchers theorize that these four conditions are actually basic human needs, similar to the need for food and shelter. We should identify, celebrate, and nurture these conditions in our personal lives, our schools, and our communities so that we can collectively help ourselves and others be more resilient.



The “road to success” was a long one, says Bernie Robinson (p. 28).

Nan Henderson, MSW, is the president of Resiliency in Action. This article is adapted from *Resiliency in Action: Practical Ideas for Overcoming Risks and Building Strengths in Youth, Families, and Communities*, published by <www.resiliency.com.> It has been adapted and used here with permission. All rights reserved. Her latest book, just published, is *The Resiliency Workbook: Bounce Back Stronger, Smarter & With Real Self-Esteem*.

Started Out Feeling Defeated

Deron Mebane

Taking my GED test and failing was a big setback for me. I had been so nervous before the test. It felt like the biggest test of my life. The day before the test, I tried to study, which made me more nervous. When I took the test, it was so long. After a while, I started doubting myself.

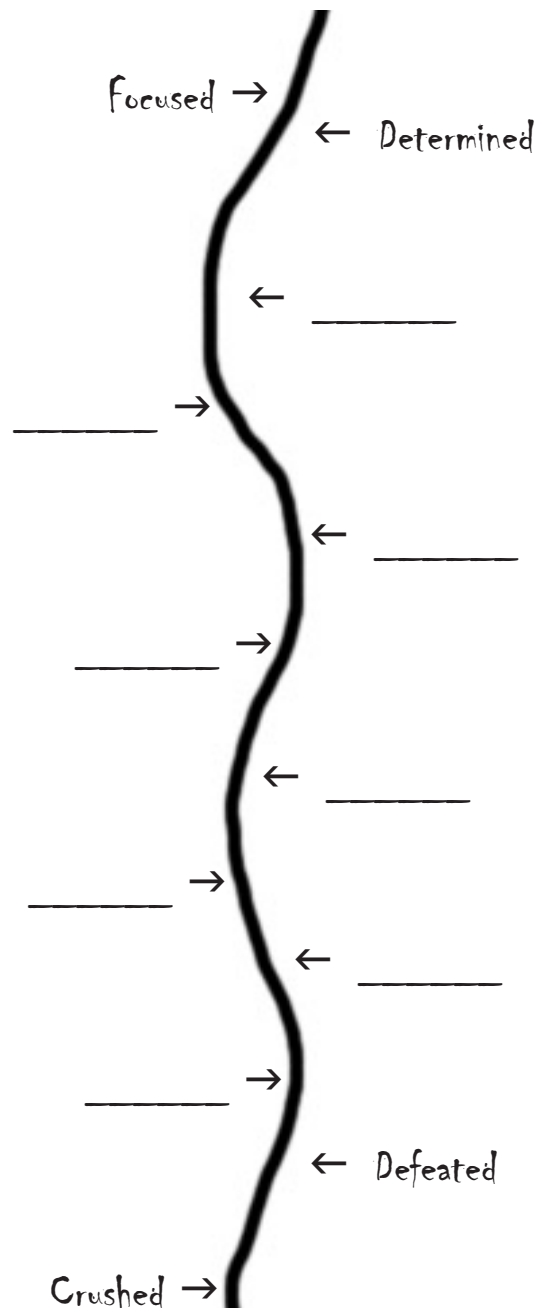
Taking the test was nerve-wracking. But waiting on my results was worse. Then I got them back and I failed by 40 points. I felt defeated and crushed. It was a major setback for me.

Instead of just retaking the test I started making excuses about why I could wait to do it later. My job became more important. My daughter was born around that time so taking care of her was my excuse not to go back and try again. Those things were important, but they were just excuses. The real reason I didn't retake the test was because I felt so bad about failing.

I think it was silly of me not to just go back and retake it. I made the decision to stick with it. Now I'm focused and determined to take and pass the GED. I feel like nothing can get in the way of me doing that. Even if I do fail again, I will just retake it until I pass.



Deron Mebane is a student at North Kansas City Schools Adult Education and Literacy in Kansas City, MO. He wants to obtain his GED because he wants to be a good example to his daughter and because he wants to go to college. Deron learned recently that he passed the test. He said, "Hearing that you passed the test is an amazing feeling."

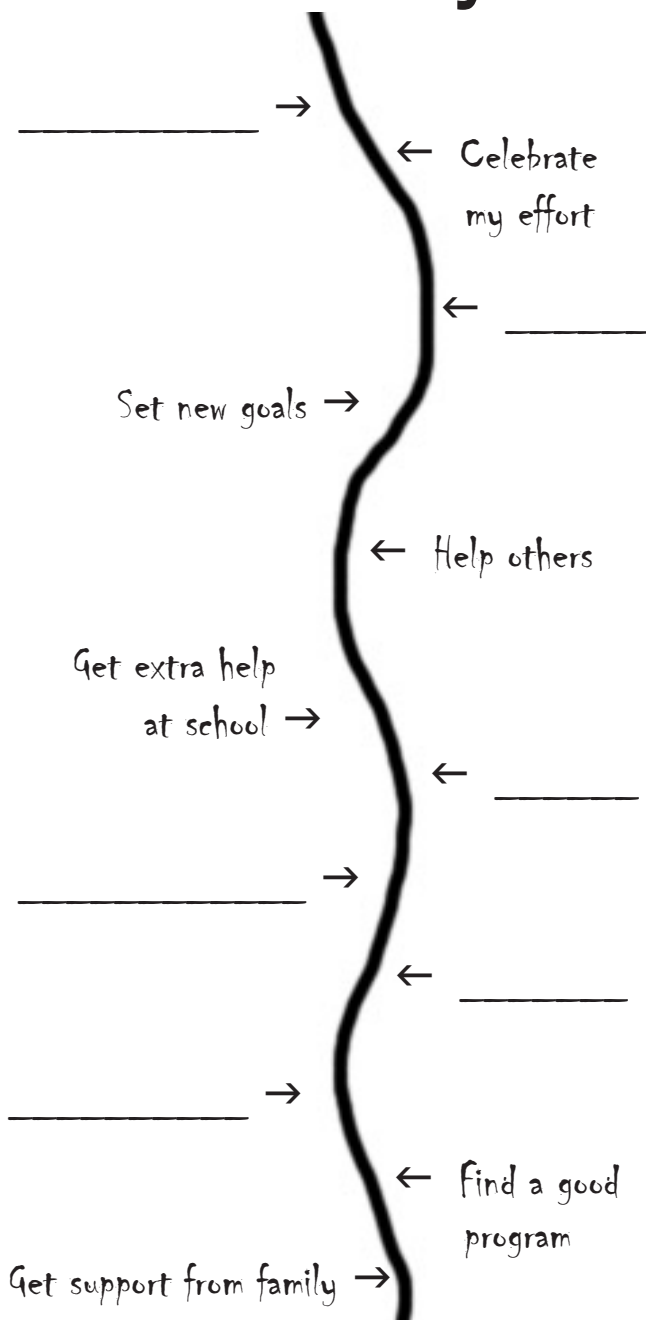


Words that Describe Feelings

Deron went from "crushed and defeated" to "focused and determined." What are some of the feelings he might have experienced along the way? Write them in the spaces provided.

My Brother Believed in Me

Danielle Thomas



The person who motivated me to get my GED was my brother. He got his GED, moved out, and got a job. I thought, "If he can do it, so can I." Unfortunately, it didn't start so well for me. The first program I tried did nothing to really connect with me and teach me. I quit that program because I felt like no one really helped me.

One day my brother called and asked me about my GED classes. I told him through tears and sobs, "I wish I never gave up so easily, then I would have my GED by now." He laughed and reminded me of everything I've achieved. He said I have no reason to cry. "You can do it!" he said. "I believe in you."

He and my mother and my grandparents all began saying those words. At that point, I knew I had to keep going not just for myself, but for my family. I wanted to prove to them that I'm done quitting. I found the GED program at Portland Community College. Here, the teachers are very supportive. I will strive to continue my education for myself and my family, and mostly for my brother. I want to show him I can do it. I will succeed thanks to him, and everyone else who is with me.

Danielle Thomas is in a GED class at Portland Community College in Portland, OR. She is interested in going to college and studying art and Japanese.



Words that Describe Actions

Danielle describes actions she took to succeed, including getting support from her family and looking for a good program. What are some more actions you could take? Write them in the spaces provided.

It's Not the What, It's the How

Ricky Silvestre

My theory is: sometimes it's only the "how" that changes, not the "what." So *how* will you approach the *what* that you are facing? I can only speak from my experiences, so read my past and understand my perspective.

Trying to be "That Dude"

Back in middle school, being "that dude" was an ambition I had. Being part of the "in crowd" meant skipping school, getting high, and going against any type of authority figure, including my parents. Keeping this goal of mine, I repeated seventh grade, and I ended up on probation for a CHINS (Child in Need of Services) petition my mother filed on me. In Massachusetts, a parent or guardian may file a CHINS petition on a child who is under 17, who runs away, does not follow the rules at home, or is generally out of control. In eighth grade, I was on probation for receiving a stolen motor vehicle and possession of marijuana with the intent to distribute in a school zone.

Still gripping my goal (I was 16 years old now and in the ninth grade), I was committed to DYS (Department of Youth Services) by the state of Massachusetts until my 18th birthday. If you are committed, DYS will decide where you will live until you turn 18 or 21. You will go to a residential or a locked program when you are first committed, but you may eventually live at home with rules set by DYS. Any violations of these rules will result in incarceration up to 90 days. This meant that if my social worker felt I violated the rules, it's straight to a locked facility I go.

On the Run

That summer, I was not looking forward to my third year as a freshman. I violated curfew, so I ran. Summer, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's passed. I was surrounded by many people, but I felt like I was all alone in the deepest and

coldest part of the ocean. My ambition to be "that dude" had back-fired.

Someone Believed in Me

While on the run I signed up for job corps and got accepted.

I decided to change my approach to life due to the constant pattern of failure and the years wasted with no accomplishments. I left a voice mail on my DYS worker's phone letting her know that I was done running and I was planning to change my life. Before I hung up, I provided the time and place of my departure to job corps. If she wanted to have me picked up, she'd know where to find me. She decided to let me be. I left to do job corps with no warrants. It felt so good to have been believed and treated like a young man. This feeling contributed to my new goal. My goal now was to obtain an education and put myself in a position to give back.

I obtained my business clerical degree from job corps nine months later. I wanted to familiarize myself with an office setting. My goal was to work with troubled youth— young people labeled "at risk." Because of my struggles and challenges, I felt I could relate to them and have an impact.

An Accident Changes My "What"

I was supposed to go back to job corps to take another shot at my GED, but unfortunately I got into a car accident. This was a major physical, emotional, and psychological blow. I'm now a tetraplegic—paralyzed from the chest down.



After the accident, I was in the hospital for a month, and then I was at Spaulding for 10 months. The doctors told me that I was paralyzed and that I would never be able to walk. But for about the first month, that information went in one ear and out the other. I thought I could just relax and take it easy. But then it hit me. It was all the “can’ts” that hit me—all the things I couldn’t do. I couldn’t participate in sports, drive, or tie my own sneakers. It was the little stuff that got to me. I needed assistance for my personal care. My independence was abruptly taken away. My social life came to a halt. A lot of my friends disappeared. All the little things that I took for granted—putting on my own earrings or being able to brush my own hair—all these “whats” in my life seemed to define my life. Not having them made me feel like my life wasn’t worth living.

I hated to see myself in the mirror. When I closed my eyes, I saw myself as tall, with a muscular build, chest out, broad shoulders. But when I opened my eyes and saw myself in the mirror, I saw a depressing sight—a physically and emotionally broken down “less-than” human being.

Looking for “How”

All these “whats” eliminated any type of “how.” I couldn’t see how I could keep living. It was impossible for any “how” to be a part of this “what.”

The new people in my life acknowledged me as the person I saw when I closed my eyes. These people were the clinicians, my neighbors, and my family. I even appreciated altercations with people because it made me realize that they were taking me seriously. They weren’t treating me like a three-year old.

My family affected me a lot. They were there for me; they backed me up emotionally. One thing they did was they didn’t help me all the time. They let me figure out how to take care of myself. Sometimes, “helping” isn’t really helping.

Once in a while, I’d have flirtatious moments, and the girl would flirt back, and that helped my self-esteem. Doing regular things—realizing that I could be helpful—shaved away a little bit of that

person in the mirror.

Still, I spent many years feeling self-pity and not doing anything productive. The same old feeling—the one I had at 17 while on the run—came back. I was wasting time with no accomplishments. I was thinking how different my life would be if I had gone to school or if I hadn’t gotten into the accident. But I couldn’t change the past, and I couldn’t change the fact that I was in a wheelchair. Those are the “whats” that I’m stuck with. I’ve learned, though, that I can change *how* I approach them.

That’s when I started going to GED classes. Now I am in college studying psychology. I plan to work with “at risk” kids someday. Everybody thinks how different their life would be if they had made some changes in their past, but I don’t dwell on that. I live for today to avoid looking back at my life and asking, “What if?”

Ricky Silvestre served on the editorial board of this issue of The Change Agent. He attends Bunker Hill Community College, where he is majoring in psychology.



Making Sense of “Whats” and “Hows”

What does the author mean when he says, “It’s not the what, it’s the how?”

Describe some “whats” and “hows” in your life. Have you ever had a situation that you could not change, but you could change your approach to it?

What I Learned From My Challenges: If you Have Children with Disabilities, You Need to Reach Out

Fawkia S. Boulerville

It is hard to have kids with disabilities. My kids have autism, so it is difficult for them to communicate with me. Usually it is hard for them to tell me what they want, but sometimes they surprise

me with something they say. I have to be very patient, but it is worth it when we finally understand each other. It makes me happy, and they feel happy, too. In order to manage all the challenges of having

autistic children, I have depended on support from my kids' teachers and from other parents.

When my sons were young, the doctor told me that they had disabilities. The doctor referred me to services and a special day care. When they got older, they went into a special needs program at the elementary school. The school developed an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for my children. I went to meetings to see what the boys were learning. They gave me strategies for communicating with the kids. It was helpful to go to the classroom. I could see what they did there, and the boys could show me what was important to them.

Communication with the teacher was so important. When the boys were in elementary school, I kept a journal with the teachers. The teachers

wrote notes to me about homework and what happened that day in school. At night, when the boys were in bed, I wrote back to the teachers to tell them how the boys were doing.

Other parents were a tremendous support. We talked to each other and shared ideas for how to take care of our children. Parents got involved doing activities after school. They did cooking projects, went bowling, and took the kids on camping trips. I am worried about what will happen to my kids when they are done with school. But I watch the other parents and I see what services they are using for their kids, and I feel reassured.

Other parents have taught me that it's okay to have kids like this. At the beginning, I blamed myself that my kids are this way. Now I know that the kids are fine. I learned that as long as I love them, they will love me back.

The key to raising kids with disabilities is having help and support so you know you are not alone. If I had to do it over again, I would because I love them so much.



The key to raising kids with disabilities is having help and support so you know you are not alone.

Fawkia Boulerville, originally from Egypt, is a student at the Adult Literacy Center in Pittsfield, MA. She is now a U.S. citizen, and the GED is one more important step for her. Her boys are very proud of her for going back to school. This is the first time she has been published, and she is very excited about it!

At the beginning, I blamed myself that my kids are this way. Now I know that the kids are fine.

What do You Think?

List three ways Fawkia got support.

Write a letter to someone whose child has disabilities. What support and advice could you offer?

During a Storm, Vermonters Learn: “One Person Could Never Do It Alone”

Amy Cowan

Nicole Roscioli and her husband, Dan, own a pizza and pasta shop in Vermont. While their home and business were unaffected when Tropical Storm Irene struck Vermont in August 2011, their community was devastated. Some people lost everything, and even more were in serious danger during the storm. Seeing the challenges that their community faced, the Roscioli family pulled on their mud boots and got to work helping.

People didn't ask for help; they were too busy. They couldn't even answer the question, “What do you need?” So Nicole and her husband Dan thought of something they could give—food! They spent several evenings driving around flood damaged areas handing out hot pizzas to families and volunteers. Nicole said, “Many people had no power and no appliances. They had been working through the day without rest. It was

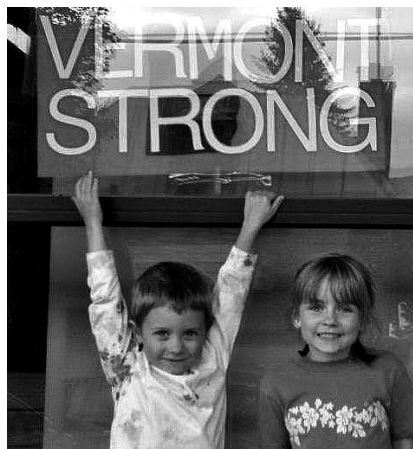


a good feeling to hand them some hot pizza and wish them luck.”

The Rosciolis know that repairing their community is an ongoing process. Throughout town people have made signs of encouragement as they come together to move forward.

Nicole said, “What we gave was so small. There's a humbling feeling of not being able to do enough because one person could never do it alone.” Thanks to people like the Rosciolis and many others who stepped up to help, no one will have to do it alone.

Amy Cowan is a High School Completion Plan Manager with Vermont Adult Learning in St. Albans, VT. Born and raised in Vermont, Amy wrote this article in an effort to highlight the effect of Irene on many communities and how each person plays a role in rebuilding Vermont.



Describe the photos you see on this page. How are the images examples of Vermonters helping each other? Photos by Nicole Roscioli.

Creating Resilience Circles

Sarah Byrnes

Everyone faces challenges in their lives, such as becoming sick or losing a loved one. When we face these bumps in the road, we try to learn from the experience and hopefully come out stronger. This helps us develop “resilience.”

A lot of life’s challenges are unavoidable. But in today’s world, many challenges are created by the society we live in. It is not enough to be indi-

vidually resilient.

For example, many of us attend schools that do not effectively help us learn or graduate. When we become sick, many of us face huge medical bills and have to file for bankruptcy. Many

of us are willing to work hard, but we still cannot find a job that pays a living wage.

If things were different, people would have an easier time accomplishing their goals. They would still face difficulties, but they would have an easier time getting an education and making ends meet. They wouldn’t need to be as resilient.

Some people who struggle in the current economy have joined small groups of 10 to 25 people called “Resilience Circles.”

These Circles help people become more resilient so they can cope with less money and new challenges. They find that the key to coping is having a supportive community. For example, Wednee Crofoot, an unemployed member of a Resilience Circle in California, says, “My group reminds me that I am a valuable member of society, even if

I’m not employed right now. That encouragement has really been huge during this time.”

Community connections also help us learn

new skills. People learn from each

other how to save money on groceries, for example.

They share cars with each other, or learn how to sew or grow food in their gardens. Community connections

can also help people find new employment or motivate them to start a small business.

As people become more resilient, they become less embarrassed and ashamed about their “failings,” such as losing a job. They realize that they are not alone and also that society has “failed” many of us. Society does not provide enough jobs with good wages. It does not provide quality education for everyone or affordable health care. As a result, we live in a world where we experience unnecessary challenges.

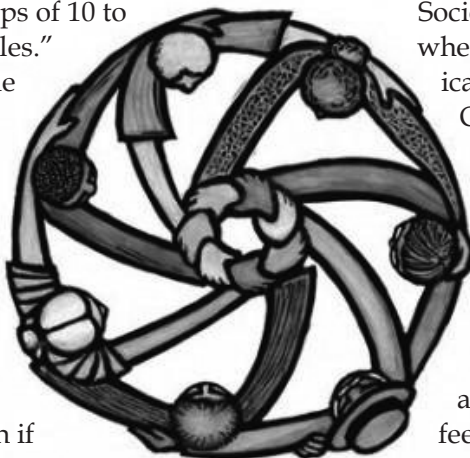
People are realizing that society could be different and that we have the power to change it.

Society’s problems may seem overwhelming if you are alone. In America today, people are very isolated.

One in four people does not have anyone to talk to about their troubles. In the 1980s, only half as many people were so isolated. This is a problem that is getting worse.

If you are isolated, it is hard to be resilient. You don’t have anyone to rely on, and you don’t feel powerful enough to help create

If you are isolated, it is hard to be resilient. You don’t have anyone to rely on, and you don’t feel powerful enough to help create a better world.



a better world. But with a group of others, you can become more resilient. You may be motivated to take action to change things.

Think of the changes people have made throughout our history. They have fought for

But with a group of others, you can become more resilient. You may be motivated to take action to change things.

Across the country, people are still doing this. They are fighting to protect public spaces like libraries and parks, create better schools, and end racial profiling. They are fighting so that immigrants can have a fair path to citizenship and workers can have respect on the job.

There are many ways to take action. You can join a neighborhood group working to fight foreclosures or improve your schools. You can attend

a protest or rally. You can call an elected official or submit a letter to the editor of your local paper. You can talk to neighbors, attend meetings, and speak out at public hearings. There are lots of ways to work for change!

Even in a perfect world, we will face heartache, sickness, and loss. We will always need to be resilient to face these things and learn from them. But we can create a society that is less draining and more fair. Society should do much more to reward people who work hard and play by the rules. We *can* create this society — we just have to work together and take action to make it happen.

Sources: <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/22/AR2006062201763.html>; <<http://localcircles.org>>.



Sarah Byrnes is the Economic Justice Organizer at the Institute for Policy Studies.

Developing Resilience to Unavoidable Pain	
Unavoidable Pain	Possible Responses
A loved one dies of natural causes	Get closer to friends and family for comfort and support
Occasional illness	Try to learn from it and grow stronger

Developing Resilience to Society-Made Pain	
Pain Created by the Way our Society Works	Possible Responses
Unemployment	Join with others to share resources; organize for more jobs
Huge medical bills	Organize with others for a better health care system

The author says some kinds of pain are unavoidable, and others are created by the way society works. The two charts above list some of the things she mentions. What would you add?

Watch Sarah Byrnes in this short video about Resilience Circles <<http://vimeo.com/39721438>>.

Listen!

Taywana “Mother Earth” James talks to Cynthia Peters about how she survived early hardships, found an unusual reading tutor, and is taking her listening skills to the streets of West Syracuse.

Taywana James, also known as “Mother Earth,” recruits participants for ProLiteracy’s Literacy for Social Change program. ProLiteracy has used Literacy for Social Change for decades in communities around the world. Recently the organization brought the program home to Syracuse, NY, where ProLiteracy staff are currently working on a project with the Westside Residents Coalition. The goal is for participants to learn literacy skills at the same time that they are taking action to improve their community.

Tell me about yourself.

I grew up in Flint, Michigan, and I experienced a lot of hardship. People used me in all sorts of ways. I had to hold on to what I was inside. I couldn’t show myself in the environment I was in, but I knew I was in there. I didn’t have the opportunity to read a book, so I had to read the environment. No one watched me, so I had to watch everything else. I didn’t have the tools I needed to make a life for myself, but that motivated me to find the tools.

How did you learn to read?

In 1996, I was 24. I was tired of not knowing how to read. I utilized what was in my reach. One day

some Jehovah’s Witnesses knocked at my door, and I thought, “They want something from me; maybe I can get something from them.” I thought I could get them to sit down and read the Bible with me, and I could learn to read that way. I figured that they would at least be patient with me. They wouldn’t laugh at me. I started studying with them. This one lady would read a Bible verse and then I would read the same verse. Then I started making my own methods for teaching myself to read. Now I’m working on my GED.

That’s an amazing strategy for learning to read! How do you think adults learn best?

Before you teach someone how to read the word “cat,” you need to find out that person’s story because they have one, and I can tell you it’s going to be a brilliant one—if they’ve come this far not knowing how to read. If you allow someone to tell their story, you’ll know how to reach them. And they will grow more confident.

Where did your confidence come from?

I met someone who heard my story. That’s one of the things I was always missing — someone who listened. He comforted me, but he didn’t have a





Kofi Addai (left) from ProLiteracy works with Mother Earth on the Literacy for Social Change project. In other photos, participants meet to discuss the problems they face in their community. Photo credit: ProLiteracy.

pity party for me. He believed in me. He made a documentary about me. If he could step out on a limb for me, I should be able to do that for myself.

What made you be able to do this work? What inspired you to make change?

I was always willing to help people out. If you knock on my door, I'll feed you. But I'm not going to go out looking for you. Gradually I realized that I'm only one person. I can't make much of a difference by myself. The only way I'm going to be heard, is to make myself available in the community—and start doing things with others.

Tell me about Literacy for Social Change.

We are working with three local groups, includ-

ing the West Side Residents Coalition, where I was a volunteer for four years. I know people in the community. They trust me. We invite people to participate in a training. We do activities that help people think about what changes they want in their neighborhood. The job I have is to recruit residents. Many of them can't read, but they are so profound; they have a lot of wisdom. They know a lot about life. They have some of the best ideas about how to deal with the problems in our cities, but we have no way to hear their voices. If we create ways for their points of view to be heard, then we could solve some of the problems we have.

How has this work affected you?

My engagement in community work has reshaped my life for the better. It has helped heal my mind and has given me a second chance at life. I am grateful for the trust and love my community has shown me and my family. If ever my community needs me, I'll be there.

What's your vision for a better world?

Why do we have so many brands of soap? So many kinds of cars? But we don't have ways to listen to people? To solve all the problems we face, it's going to take a lot of us. If all of us collectively worked together on this planet, where would strife be? Where would hunger be? My vision is simple: it's that we listen to each other.

Taywana "Mother Earth" James works at ProLiteracy in Syracuse, NY. She would like to thank Cynthia Peters for reaching out to her and to the Westside Community of Syracuse.



We Are Change

Lisa Gimbel and Students at the Welcome Project



Students talked about what would make it easier to be healthy in our community.



This is the way we walk to the supermarket, where we can get fresh food. It is dangerous to walk here. We don't have enough public transportation.



We went to talk to the mayor about the changes we need. He agreed with us. He said he would help us improve public transportation.



We also went together to meet with other elected officials. We told them what we wanted.

EXTRA!

What can a mayor actually do? Download (and adapt to your needs) a worksheet about how much power a mayor has: www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras.



One week later, we learned that the MBTA was going to cut the only bus that comes to our community, the 95 bus.



We participated in rallies and protests to say "NO!" So did thousands of other people in Massachusetts.



We went to meetings and made plans. We talked to our congresspeople. We showed the MBTA that we were a strong force in the community.



The MBTA agreed to keep the 95 bus! They are still going to raise the price, though. We will keep fighting!

EXTRA!

Interested in learning more? See <www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras> for an essay by Lisa Gimbel about how she navigated this project with her ESOL students.

Participatory Budgeting

Community Solutions to Community Problems

Jesse Strecker

What does a community do when its needs aren't being met? When the government neglects it, when the tax dollars don't come, when the projects meant to solve its problems fall short, or miss the mark entirely?

Organize to make the decisions yourself, of course! Take as much of the public budget back into your hands as you can. Propose, research, and vote on your own solutions to the problems in your community. That is exactly what people living in cities across the world have been doing in greater and greater numbers, ever since Porto Alegre, a city in Brazil, opened up its budget for a process known as Participatory Budgeting in 1989.

After spreading across Latin America, Western Europe, parts of Asia and Africa, Participatory Budgeting (PB for short) has made its way to North America. Chicago's 49th ward has been practicing PB since 2010, deciding collectively how

to spend the neighborhood's \$1.3 million of discretionary funds. Following months of organizing by a coalition of groups in New York City, four city districts have developed and voted on their first round of projects in March of this year.

The results? A new van for Meals on Wheels in Harlem, new computers for a public school in Queens, and a community composting system in Brooklyn. Also, more than 4,000 people became actively involved in determining the future of their community. A recent survey found that 82% of participants plan to become involved with a community organization after voting.

PB isn't fixing everybody's problems. The amount of money residents can use is relatively small. On top of that, PB has no input on how taxes are raised. And given how wealth is consolidated in the hands of the 1%, PB runs the risk of making governments look like they invite democratic participation when in fact they do more to protect corporate wealth. If the process doesn't grow to take more control of how governments decide their budgets, it runs the risk of losing relevance as marginalized communities face more pressing matters.

But, hey, if we fight for it, maybe we could get control of a chunk of the city-wide budget... and then maybe the state-wide budget! Who knows what will be next?

Jesse Strecker is an ESOL facilitator and community organizer at English for Action in Providence, RI.



In 2009, Toronto Community Housing tenants decided how to invest \$9 million on ideas that will improve tenants' quality of life. Now they are in their 11th year of Participatory Budgeting. <www.torontohousing.ca/participatory_budgeting>.

**HOW WOULD
YOU SPEND
\$1 MILLION
OF THE
CITY'S MONEY?**

Downsized After 22 Years on the Job

Michael Jackson

I experienced a major setback while I was working in the mailroom at a small law firm. Everything had been going fine for about 17 years. Then they decided to merge my firm with a much larger firm.

Dramatic changes happened quickly. We moved to a much larger building and went from using three floors to eight floors. Everything was so different—it was like starting a whole new job. Some of my close friends were let go; I met a lot of new people.

After about five years, I was doing my regular routines when my supervisor called me on the phone and asked me to meet with him in one of the conference rooms. I'll never forget that day. When I went in, the floor manager was also there. They told me the company was downsizing and they had to let me go. I was in shock, and I felt devastated. I didn't see it coming at all! After 22 years, I thought this could never happen to me.

They told me to wait in the room. Soon the human relations personnel came and explained in more detail how I could go and apply for unemployment and so forth. Afterwards, I went down-

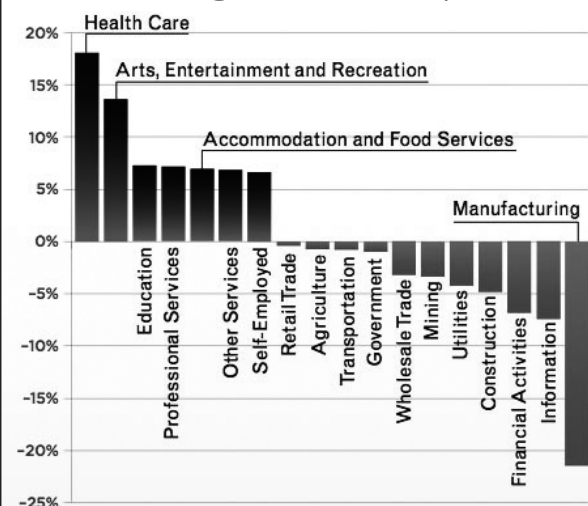
stairs and packed my things. I went home that day feeling very depressed.

Quickly I learned how to look for jobs online, which was new for me. After 22 years of being employed, I discovered that most jobs require a high school diploma or GED. I hope by earning a GED I will be able to get a better job. Losing my job after 22 years with the same firm was a huge setback in my life, but I learned to cope by taking action.



Michael Jackson was born in Jamaica and came to the U.S. in 1986. After he lost his job, he entered the Mid-Manhattan Learning Center #5 in New York City to pursue his GED and to gain more job skills. In his free time, he likes to workout and play soccer. He is a big soccer fan, as most Jamaicans are!

Percent Change in Jobs in NY, 2008-2018



Where Are the Jobs?

Study the chart. Describe what you see.

Name two job areas that are expected to increase and two that are expected to decrease.

Write several true statements that reflect the data in the chart.

Imagine there are 100,000 jobs in health care in NY in 2008. How many will there be in 2018? Create your own percent problems based on the chart and solve them.

Look at the Occupational Outlook Handbook at www.bls.gov/OCO to learn more about which jobs are expected to grow, which ones pay a living wage, etc.

The Long Road to Success

Bernie Robinson

During my whole life, I have been in and out of trouble. From the age of 13 to 28, I was drinking and I was off and

The last time I hit rock bottom was enough for me. It made me open my eyes and realize there is more to life than drugs and alcohol.

on hooked on street drugs. My whole criminal record is based on my drinking. Every time I would get drunk, I would get in trouble or end up in jail. Yes, I have been to jail, and it isn't much fun. Actually, it is one of the worst places I've been. Doing drugs caused me to hit rock bottom. I lost relationships, jobs, vehicles, and a lot of money.

The last time I hit rock bottom was enough for me. It made me open my eyes and realize there is more to life than drugs and alcohol. Now I have the greatest family in the world: a loving and supportive girlfriend and two handsome boys. I also am in the process of buying a truck and have a good job building garages.

The most important thing I have changed is that I am now in school. I always told myself I would never go back. I hated school or thought school was boring. But now that I am back in school, I love it. In the long run, I will have a better education, a dependable job, and more money. I will be able to support my family and do the things I always wanted to do. So even though it took me all those years of hitting rock bottom and getting in trouble, I have finally made it onto the road to success.



Bernie Robinson is a student at the Maine School Administrative District #49.

HITTING ROCK BOTTOM

Describe what "rock bottom" looked like for Bernie (above) and/or for Brian (p. 29).

A Battle Against Myself

Brian Washington

Have you ever hit rock bottom and wondered how you could ever recover? I am one of those people. In the early 1990s, I was not living well. I was not taking good care of myself. I was a mess because of my drinking and partying lifestyle. I was lost in of a world of self-destruction. I thought I would die from it! I did not know myself anymore. The man who used to run 10 miles and work out every day was gone. He was gone, and I did not know how to find him!

I was a mess because of my drinking and partying lifestyle. I was lost in of a world of self- destruction.



Brian Washington is a student at Bristol Community College in Attleboro, MA.

I felt less than human during that time. If you had seen me then, you would have thought I was one of those people who would never be able to recover. However, on March 4, 1996, God showed His grace and mercy. I started to go to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. I started to turn my life around. It was one of hardest battles to fight because I was fighting against myself.

Alcoholism is a disease that does not care one bit about you. It does not care what race you are or how much money you have. It doesn't matter how many titles you have. All it really wants to do is destroy anything positive in your life and replace it with alcohol. But God gave me the blessing of resilience to help me combat this disease that was devastating my life. All I have is one day at a time.

RECOVERING FROM ROCK BOTTOM

Describe what recovery looked like for Bernie (p. 29) and/or for Brian (above).



PRE-READING WARM-UP

1. You are an African American family, and the Ku Klux Klan kills your cat in an effort to intimidate you. You decide to stand up to the KKK and you refuse to move out of the neighborhood. One of the side effects of your action is:
 - a) Stray cats start hanging around your house.
 - b) A cat food company asks for your endorsement.
 - c) The KKK suddenly renounces racism.
 - d) Your child shows more resilience in school, does better academically, and has more faith in the possibility of a bright future.
2. You are an experienced female construction worker who loses her job to a less experienced man. You sue the company, claiming gender discrimination. One of the effects of your action is:
 - a) The construction company decides to only hire women from now on.
 - b) Your family begs you to get a more “feminine” job.
 - c) Other workers wear pink in solidarity with you.
 - d) Your niece, who observed your struggle, feels less resigned about unfair barriers at school and more optimistic about her own chances for academic success.
3. After responding to questions 1 and 2 above and reviewing the answers (see below), discuss what you think the article will be about. What do you predict it will say about role-modeling?

For questions 1 and 2, the correct answer is D. Are you curious about why? Read the article to find out.

A Surprise (Extra) Benefit of Standing Up for Your Rights

There is a lot of debate about what could support African American adolescents to do well in school. There is talk of smaller or larger classes, more or less standardized testing, and new approaches to teaching reading. But what if “at risk” young people need more than certain classroom strategies? What if one of the keys to doing well academically is having role models who fight for their rights? What if these role models help young students

even though the rights they are fighting for have nothing to do with school and may not even have a direct connection to the young person?

In a study about what makes low-income African American adolescents succeed in school, despite many obstacles, researchers found something very interesting. They found that resilient youths had a certain experience in common: They had witnessed family and community members fight for their rights. This group of students all had caretakers who protested when they experienced discrimination or racism.

For example, one mother protested when her more accomplished daughter lost a school oratory competition to a white student. In another family, an aunt sued for gender discrimination when she lost out to a less experienced man for a construction job. In a third, the family refused to move after the KKK killed their cat. And in another family, there was on-going discussion about the need for collective action to protest discrimination and fight for equal access to jobs.

Role Models for Resilience

In similar situations, the families of the less resilient students tended to retreat or resign themselves to the injustice. What contributed to the resilience of students was role models to show them that individuals and communities can actively resist social injustices.

The information from this study tells us that school success for African American adolescents doesn't come *just* from what goes on in the classroom. It comes also from what young people see in the community around them. And being a good role model perhaps includes showing young people not just ways to make their way through life's obstacles, but also ways to remove those obstacles.

Andy Nash is director of NELRC. **Source:** O'Connor, C. (1997). "Dispositions toward (collective) struggle and educational resilience..." *American Educational Research Journal*, 34, 593-629.

POST-READING ACTIVITIES

Have you ever seen someone speak up against an injustice? What happened? How did it affect you?

Have you ever seen a group of people take action against an injustice? What happened? How did it affect you?

Have you ever spoken up about an injustice (either alone or with a group)? What happened? How did you feel afterwards? How did it affect you?

What role models do you want your children to have?

What examples of oppression do your children see around them?

What can you do to make sure your children don't resign themselves to a limited future?

Look at the picture below. Talk about what you see. How do you think the children will be affected by seeing the adults around them take action?



My Cousin Is Living with HIV

Oumou Camara

Two years ago, my cousin Aisha decided that she wanted to start a new life. She saved her money so she could come to the U.S. to get a college degree in English. Aisha was very enthusiastic about her

Aisha was desperate. She said that all her dreams had collapsed. She felt that she had no reason to live.

plan. She went to the U.S. embassy to get a visa. They told her that she had to get a physical exam. Two days after the exam, the doctor told her that

she tested positive for HIV. This was her tragedy. There was nothing we could say to relieve her. Aisha was desperate. She said that all her dreams had collapsed. She felt that she had no reason to live. She didn't want to eat, and she lost her smile. She was miserable. One day she tried to commit suicide. She took a lot of pills and she was about to die. Fortunately her friend found her and brought her to the hospital. I know it sounds awful, and it really was.

I don't know what happened, but when Aisha came back from the hospital she was like another person. I guess she realized that life is too great to surrender. She started to take control of her life. She saw a specialist. She had more confidence in herself. Her courage was impressive.

In addition to taking care of herself, Aisha created an association to fight HIV. She is so pas-

sionate about her work. It helps her stay strong. She teaches people how to avoid getting HIV. She meets people who think they could never get HIV. She tells them that nothing is impossible and that nobody is immunized against HIV.

I am inspired by Aisha's strength. Her resilience reminds me that we must never give up despite the problems we face.

Today, Aisha is living with HIV. She is still in Senegal and she gets medical care, but she doesn't seem like someone who is sick. She is living to help other people as much as she can. Aisha is definitely the most resilient person that I know.



Above, Oumou Camara. Her cousin is living with HIV.

Aisha doesn't seem like someone who is sick. She is living to help other people as much as she can.

Oumou Camara, age 22, is from Guinea, West Africa. She has been in the U.S. for nine months. She is enrolled in ESOL classes at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. She plans to study finance.

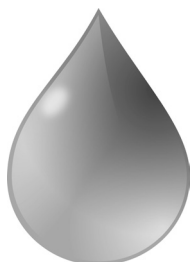
What is HIV?



HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. HIV can lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS. AIDS is the late stage of HIV infection, when a person's immune system is very weak and therefore unable to fight diseases and certain cancers. People who die "from AIDS" actually die because their bodies can no longer protect them from other diseases.

Learn More about HIV

From www.AIDS.gov



If a person is HIV positive, the virus might be in any of these body fluids:

- ☐ blood
- ☐ semen (cum)
- ☐ pre-seminal fluid (pre-cum)
- ☐ vaginal fluid
- ☐ breast milk



HIV can enter the body through:

- ☐ lining of the anus or rectum
- ☐ lining of the vagina or cervix
- ☐ opening to the penis
- ☐ mouth that has sores or bleeding gums
- ☐ cuts or sores



Some ways a person gets HIV:

- ☐ having sex (anal, vaginal or oral) with someone who is HIV positive
- ☐ sharing needles with someone who is HIV positive
- ☐ giving birth or breastfeeding (when the mother is HIV positive)

Safer Sex: Find Out What You Know!

1. You can get HIV from:

- a) a toilet seat
- b) a hand shake
- c) unprotected sex with someone who has HIV
- d) being gay

2. If you have sex with more than one partner, you should get tested:

- a) never
- b) every 3-6 months
- c) once a year
- d) only your partners should get tested

3. These sexual acts carry no risk:

- a) casual or dry kissing
- b) masturbation
- c) frottage (dry humping)
- d) all of the above

4. Condoms can reduce the risk of getting HIV if:

- a) you use them consistently and correctly
- b) you use the latex kind
- c) you use water-based lubricant
- d) all of the above

Answers: 1: HIV cannot be transmitted through casual contact or by having a certain identity, so a, b and d are incorrect. C is correct because HIV is transmitted via body fluids. 2: Doctors recommend getting tested every 3-6 months. 3: Using condoms is a safer way to have sex, but condoms can break or leak, so they are not 100% safe. All of these practices are considered 100% safe; D is correct. 4: D is correct. To reduce risk of HIV, always use a condom; do not use "natural lamb" condoms – only use latex; and do not use oil-based lubricants as they weaken the latex in the condom.

We Don't Quit

Nelly C. Albancando Comer

Mikuitapash namikushpa punuitapash napunushpa imata rimashka kashpapash pihuan kashpapash amayuyashpa rimanan canchi.

Although we are without food or sleep, we have to finish what we have begun, in order to see the results of our efforts.

— my father, Luis Enrique Albancando

Where I Am From

I thank my parents for their guidance and support and for teaching me not to give up. I am indigenuous Kichwa, and we don't quit.

I was born in Bogota, Colombia. My parents are native Ecuadorian Kichwa. They preserved the customs, traditions, and language of our Kichwa culture. They are artisans, farmers, and merchants of their products.

In 1960, they went to Colombia seeking new opportunities in life. My mom, Rose Elena, often says, "We traveled with a few things, a basket of cereal and some clothes." My father got a job as a weaver. Gradually, he was able to save and build his own loom. He began to work independently, making shawls, tablecloths, and blankets, which he sold to tourists who visited the city.

A Struggle for Native Rights

Sometimes there were problems. My father, along with other Ecuadorian artisans, gathered to talk about the mistreatment they faced. Sometimes they were



The author with children from the Kichwa pre-school. Below, Nelly's parents and children before she was born.

not treated in hospitals. Native children who were born in Colombia were ridiculed for their long hair, their clothes, and their physical traits.

After a long political battle, native communities won some rights in 1991. But the leaders of the Kichwa people continued to meet to claim their full rights. One project we worked on was a pre-school for the indigenous communities living

in Bogota. I volunteered to work on the project. I wanted the children to have a safe place to play and learn and preserve their culture.

The sector where these children lived was a depressed place. People used drugs. There was prostitution, vandalism, and violence. Parents did not have safe places where they could leave children while they went to work as street vendors.

Although I was a little worried about my economic situation, I



accepted the task. To earn money, I sold handicrafts and accessories which I wove on a handloom with my parents, but sales were not good every day. For this reason, I sometimes felt very discouraged. When I felt doubt about my work, I remembered the images of the Kichwa children growing up in the city, playing in the street, sometimes sick, without adequate food, and facing many dangers while their parents worked. Most sad of all, these children had very little knowledge of their Kichwa origins.



One of the Kichwa pre-schoolers.

Keeping Kichwa Culture Alive

My mom told me, “You can do it. You can help this project. You know how children suffer there in the streets. I’m embroidering some blouses. Your dad is going to sell ‘papayuelas’ and pumpkins. We will sell these things. Do not worry. We’ll get by somehow.”

In this way, I got encouragement. And every time I saw my children (I think of them as “my” children), I saw in their eyes that they had hopes that something better would come to them.

I started researching about Kichwa techniques for raising children. I learned about the lullabies, games, celebrations, dances, and styles of parenting in the first five years of life. I wanted our pre-school to include Kichwa traditions and customs. Life for the Kichwa in the city was so hard, we sometimes ignored our own culture.

EXTRA!

Read another story about cultural resilience. “Women are the Backbone of the Somali Community” is by Mohamed J. Farah, and you can find it at <www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras>.

We had many setbacks trying to start our kindergarten. But we finally opened. To our surprise, 120 children enrolled. On October 25, 2010, we opened the doors of our pre-school for the first time. In our language, we say “Wawakunapak Yachahuna Wasy.” This means, “House of Learning for Children.” It was like a dream. After much effort, we opened a school that would keep our customs and traditions alive.

I shared with the children traditional dances, ancestral games, songs, food, culture, use of plants in natural medicine, and the values we had

learned from our parents. Each day, I enjoyed the children’s company. I enjoyed seeing their development. I most enjoyed dancing with them because we all moved together to the beat of the music. We held hands, and so we shared. They were unforgettable days of my life.

I still feel their hugs and kisses on my last day of work. I told one of my children, “I will not be here tomorrow. I will travel. I love you. Do not forget me. One day I will return, and seek you. You are a good boy.”

Nelly Cecilia Albancando Comer is studying English at Chatahoochee Technical College in Canton, GA. She has worked as a cook and taught cooking. She loves to sing, dance, draw, and cook. She would like to go to college and study social work. She hopes to help her Kichwa children someday. In 2010, she met a nice man and accepted him. They were married last year.



Doing Time

Stephen Mesic

When you're doing time, your life is put on hold. It is like being stuck behind a pane of glass as the outside world passes you by like an endless film. You sit and wait to be set free so you can once again be someone, a part of something, a piece of life. While I was in jail, I had a lot of time to lie on my bunk thinking *what if...if only....* The days were long, and I was getting more and more depressed.

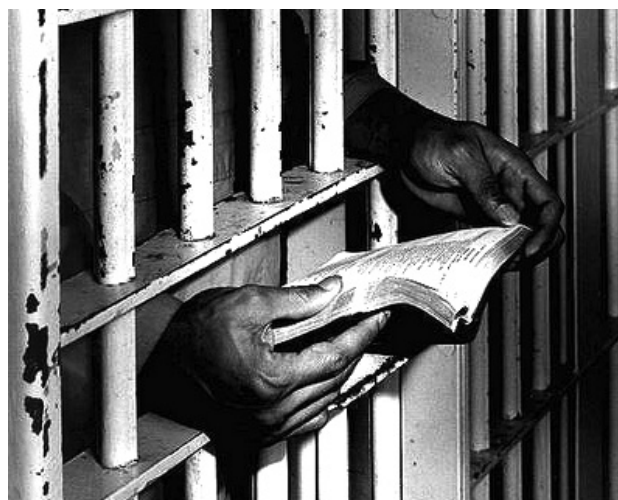
One night while I was lying in my bunk unable to sleep, I picked up a book and started to read. Before I knew it, it was after midnight. The time had passed quickly. This was it. This was

Not only was I keeping myself busy, but I found that reading put me in a whole new place. Each book gave me a new adventure.

what I needed. When I woke up the next morning, I went straight to the jail's library, selected a bunch of books, and started reading. I was reading a new book every couple of days, and the days were flying by. I found my way of coping with my spare time, and I learned things that I would never have known if I did not pick up a book and start to read.

Not only was I keeping myself busy, but I found that reading put me in a whole new place. Each book gave me a new adventure. I never knew that reading could be so exciting and cost you nothing. My time in jail was passing a lot more quickly, and I was sleeping better. Before I knew it, I had little time left until my release.

Soon, I will return to New Hampshire—to my life, my family, and my work. My greatest happiness will be having the chance to reconnect with

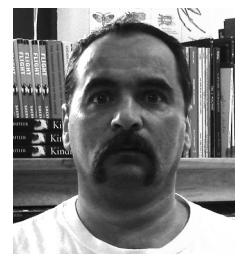


my three daughters. I love spending time talking to them and hearing about what's going on in their lives. Nothing will ever separate us again if I have anything to say about it.

Now I know that when I make choices, I will make sure I look at all options before I act. I will make sure I don't do something that will put me back behind the glass that holds people hostage in such a way that you just want to give up on life.

When I get the chance to see my children again, I am going to tell them how being in prison will eat your life away one day at a time. I will tell them to do the right things in life so that they will never have to experience the loneliness that I have. I'll tell them how reading books and taking those reading trips every day got me through some of the hardest days of my life and that if they ever have a really bad day, just pick up a book and sail away.

Stephen Mesic is enrolled in a GED class at the Hampshire Sheriff's Office Adult Learning Center. He found that it is never too late to learn and that if you're willing to learn, there are teachers who care and want to help. All you have to do is show up.



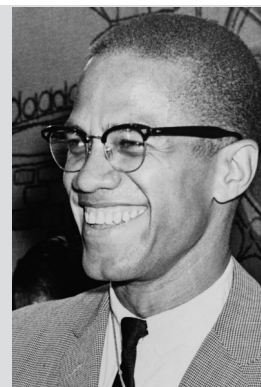
EXTRA!

Read another inmate's story of transformation: Download Isaac Howard's "Positive People Mature after Bad Choices" from <www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras>.

Reading Changed the Course of My Life

*an excerpt from
The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive. I certainly wasn't seeking any degree, the way a college confers a status symbol upon its students. My homemade education gave me, with every additional book that I read, a little bit more sensitivity to the deafness, dumbness, and blindness that was afflicting the black race in America. Not long ago, an English writer telephoned me from London, asking questions. One was, "What's your alma mater?" I told him, "Books."



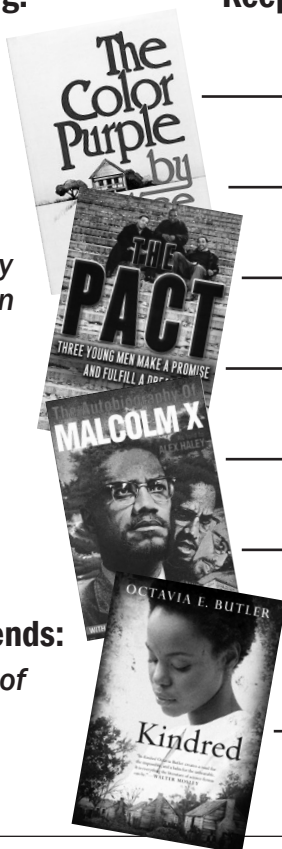
Something more: Watch the video about the poet Jimmy Baca <www.tv411.org/writing> telling the story of how he learned to read and write in prison and how it changed his life.

Stephen's Recommended Reading:

- Jeff Henderson, *Cooked*
- Coe Booth, *Bronxwood*
- Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Sampson Davis et al, *The Pact*
- Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*
- Octavia Butler, *Kindred*
- Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*
- Walter Dean Myers, *Bad Boy*
- anything by James Patterson, Patricia Cornwell, Michael Connelly, Stewart Woods, or Dean Koontz

The Change Agent also Recommends:

- Farah Ahmedi, *The Other Side of the Sky*
- Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*



Keep a Reading List for Yourself Here:

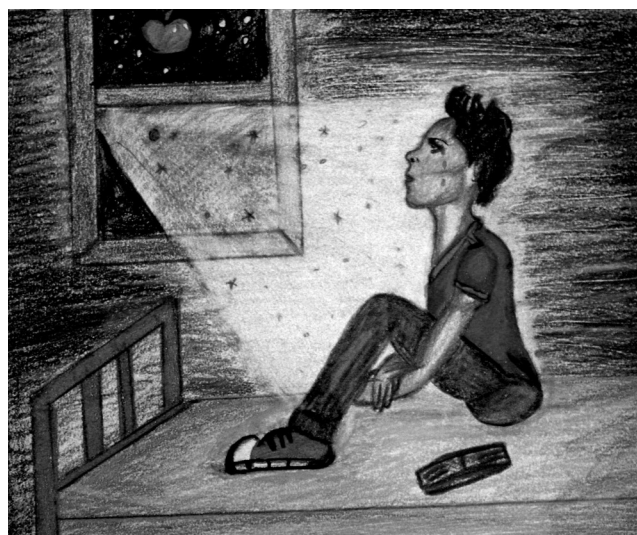
Drawing Inspiration from Art

Nestor Carrillo

When the storm is stronger than ever and it's hard to find any relief, I need help to keep going. I often turn to my family and friends. However, sometimes family and friends are not enough motivation for a person who has big expectations in life. For deeper inspiration, I turn to art. My own drawing helps me deal with stress. And the work of great artists, particularly Frida Kahlo, a famous Mexican painter, inspires me. Her expressive portraits reveal a life that was both exciting and painful; her story motivates me to pursue my artistic dreams.

Drawing Helps Me Think

Since I moved from my parents' house, I have faced numerous obstacles. Because of the recession, I have been struggling financially. Sometimes, I have just \$20 in my pocket to cover my personal expenses for the whole week. It is hard to have hope or motivation at this point. However, if I have a piece of paper and a pencil, I can draw. Drawing relaxes me. It helps me think of



"The Light that Guides Me," by the author.

solutions to my problems. In "The Light That Guides Me," a young boy (me) sits on a bed looking at the window hoping for a miracle to happen. The empty wallet symbolizes pov-

erty, and the light coming through the window represents hope. The tears rolling down the boy's cheek illustrate the boy's nostalgia for everything he left behind.

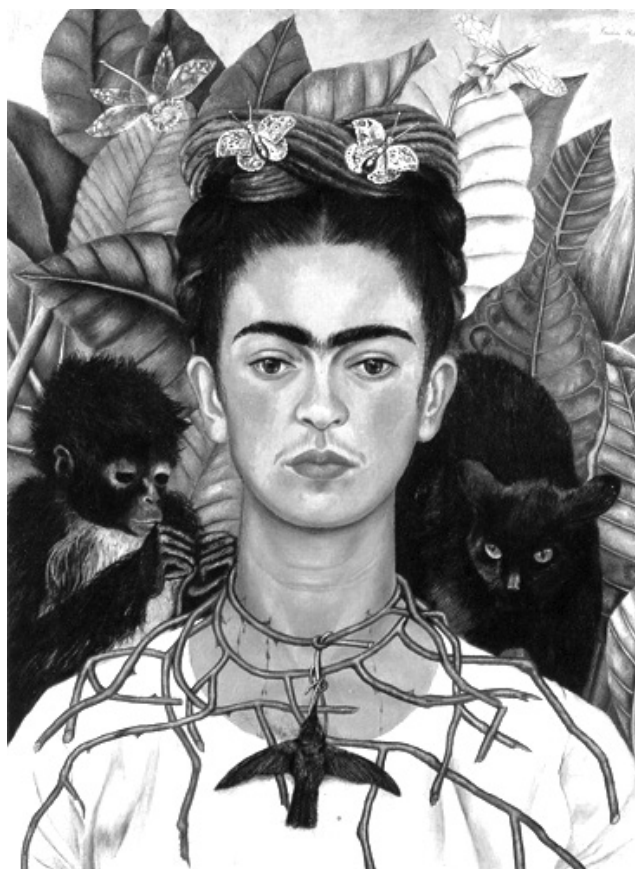
When I finished this drawing and studied it, I realized that I was being dramatic. Crying and hoping for miracles would not help me find a job. I had to be wiser. The next day I got out of bed and started to apply for every job that I could. I felt positive and empowered. I was taking control of my life. Now, six years later I'm a professional actor and I am continuing my education at Borough of Manhattan Community College. I work hard every day to accomplish my goals and one day, with the money I make, I will support my parents.

Great Art Can Be Transformative

To stay motivated, I sometimes turn to great art. There are so many great artists, but Frida Kahlo has been an especially important role model for me. At age six, she got polio, which damaged her right leg. She also had an accident at age 15, which left her with serious injuries, including a broken spinal column and many other broken bones. Also, an iron handrail pierced her abdomen and her uterus, which made it hard for her to get pregnant later in life. In addition to these traumas, she was obsessed with a man (the famous Mexican painter, Diego Rivera) who did not love her back equally.

She used her paintings to communicate about

When I finished this drawing, I realized that I was being dramatic. Crying and hoping for miracles would not help me find a job.



"Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Humming-bird"
(Reprinted here under the "fair use" principle of U.S.
copyright law. See <wikipedia.org> for more information.)

her struggles with her body and with love. They are powerful, expressive pieces by a strong Mexican woman who, despite her pain, kept fighting to enjoy her life. When I see how Kahlo transformed the most harmful moments into colorful and meaningful portraits, I realize that we have to love life with its good and bad moments, because both of them are important for our own personal growth as human beings.

Finding Beauty in Struggle

Since I have never taken art classes, I know that my drawings are very simple. Still, being able to express myself through art helps me think about myself and find solutions to my problems. Looking at the work of great artists, particularly

someone like Frida Kahlo, reminds me that you can create beauty out of struggle. When I see her problems reflected in her paintings, I feel blessed. She

motivates me to

learn from my struggles and to get stronger and wiser. We all have bad moments. But art helps us embrace our chance for happiness and success.

Frida Kahlo used her paintings to communicate about her struggles with her body and with love.

Nestor Carrillo was born in El Salvador and was raised in Mexico. Now, he lives in the Bronx, NY. He works as a professional actor on stage and in TV commercials. He is also an artist and stage designer. His main goal is to collaborate in the search for World Peace. Meanwhile, he wishes to thank the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) and the Continuing Education Program. He recently passed the GED test and will start college soon.



Resilience from Art

Write two ways the author draws inspiration from art.

1. _____

2. _____

Who is your favorite visual artist? (It doesn't have to be someone famous.)
Write about why this artist inspires you.

Love Never Fails

Wendy Lu

I've had a deep pain in my heart since I lost my mother. I was her favorite child, and after my father passed away, she planned to live with me. I had worked very hard to get ready for her to move in with me, but unfortunately a heart attack took my mother's life. It was a bolt from the blue. Mother was strong and was always next to me when I needed her. I knew I couldn't touch her and she couldn't hear me anymore. She was totally gone. I felt a lot of regret and guilt until I met an 80-year-old lady named Kiyoko.

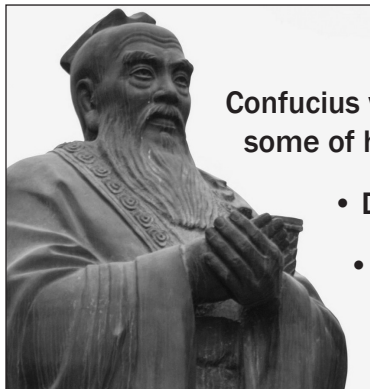
I was sitting in the Hunter College dining room about to open my lunch box when I saw a hunchback woman with dirty clothes eating a piece of dry bread. I walked over to her and asked her in Chinese if she wanted some of my food. She couldn't understand me; she spoke Japanese. We discovered we could speak English together. I gave her my phone number in case she needed some help. That evening I got a call from her saying she wanted to see me the next day.

She gave me a box of Japanese green tea and said she lived alone in a senior citizens' apartment nearby. I wanted to walk her home, but she was embarrassed and told me to let her walk alone. She said, "My apartment is too messy; I never have guests." I told her, "Don't worry; I just want to know where you live."



Wendy Lu and her friend Kiyoko.

When she opened the door, there were boxes all over and there was almost no room to walk. The refrigerator was almost empty. I found some scissors and put newspaper around her neck to give her a haircut and she was as obedient as a child. I took her in front of the mirror and told her how beautiful she looked. The next day I brought her a blender and some fresh food. I threw out the trash, cleaned up her apartment, and applied for



Who Was Confucius?

Confucius was a Chinese philosopher who lived from 551–479 BC. Here are some of his sayings:

- Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.
- Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves.
- I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.

a home attendant to cook for her.

We started to entertain guests. She had a nice neighbor, Boa, from Jamaica and he played the guitar. We would sing and chant. One day, I asked her if she ever had a boyfriend and she said that during World War II most men enlisted in the army. I said, "They invaded China and massacred my people." She looked at me innocently and said, "Really?!" But we treasured our friendship in spite of this.

We celebrated almost every big holiday together. A number of times, she was taken to the emergency room and as soon as I appeared, she relaxed. Her health was getting worse, and finally she needed 24-hour care in a nursing home. She lost her appetite and was depressed. I fed her Japanese food and spent as much time with her as I could. It was during this period that I discovered how kind U.S. society can be.

A lady with a cute dog visited the patients; musicians and schoolchildren performed, making every grandma and grandpa laugh. Some volunteers taught handicrafts and drew with great patience. Kiyoko's favorite time was when I took her for walks in a wheelchair and we watched pedestrians under the sun.

Unexpectedly, one day the doctor said that her cancer had spread. A special treatment was too risky for her. "I want to die naturally. I'm ready for it," she replied gently but firmly. She was sent to the hospital which was a quiet and beautiful place. The workers were kind and polite; they warmed your heart. Church members took turns bringing flowers, reading the Bible, and singing hymns.

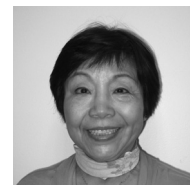
A Friendship Thrives Despite Historical Enmity



On the left: Wendy Lu and Kiyoko share a meal together. On the right: an illustration of the first Sino-Japanese War, which started in 1894. In 1937, Japan invaded China, starting the second Sino-Japanese War. According to historian Mitsuyoshi Himeta, at least 2.7 million Chinese civilians died during the second Sino-Japanese War. Japan had a "three alls" policy – "kill all, loot all, burn all." **Source:** <www.wikipedia.org>

That was such a sweet and valuable "last lesson" for me. I learned and experienced the meaning of life. Seven years of friendship helped with the pain of losing my mother. I was especially able to see and feel the love I received from America. It's just as Confucius taught: Love others' elders as your own; treat others' children as your own.

Wendy Lu was born in China and moved to Taiwan. She studied Chinese literature, worked as a broadcaster, and taught the Chinese language in Taiwan. She now lives in New York City and is studying English with the Workers United Education program.



For Discussion

What helps Wendy Lu feel better after her mother dies?

Why do you think Wendy's friendship with Kiyoko thrives despite the historical enmity between China and Japan?

Heroes Among Us

Valentina Kobrin

On April 26, 1986, there was a nuclear accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Ukraine. The accident killed or injured many people and caused massive economic and environmental damage.

I was only 11 years old in 1986, and my sister was two. We lived in a small town in Siberia. My father worked as a flight mechanic on a helicopter. He was 35 years old. I remember that day very clearly. When I came home from school, I heard my mom and dad having a heated discussion. My

mother was crying.

My mother was crying. The government was calling for volunteers to help with the Chernobyl accident. My father signed up as a volunteer.

Now I understand why my mother cried that day. It was not a regular flight mission. It was a dangerous mission that has affected my father (and many others) ever since.

The government was calling for volunteers to help with the Chernobyl accident. My father signed up as a volunteer. He and a few others from our region were sent to Chernobyl.

Now I understand



A helicopter participating in Chernobyl clean up (from <http://chernobyl.hu/thestory.html>).

Right after the explosion at Chernobyl, lots of firemen, military people, and other specialists were sent to work on the reactor and surroundings. They were later called “liquidators.” Once they got the maximum allowed amount of radiation, they were sent back home and others came to take their place. My father lived with other liquidators in a nearby city. In June in the Ukraine, the flowers are blooming, and so they were that year. It was hard to realize that there was death all around them.

My dad was there for two weeks. He returned home alive, but not healthy. After a while he developed serious health problems. He started to be sick often. He began having problems with



Women hold portraits of emergency workers who fought the blaze at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor, during a commemoration ceremony in Kiev in December 14, 2007.



Medal of Valor and Compassion

his lungs and nervous system. Doctors told him that if he did not take good care of himself, he would not live long. He listened to their advice. He was discharged from his job. It was a shock for my dad, because he loved his work. All the other guys from my father's crew had similar problems. Some are already dead. Others have lots of health problems.

After the Chernobyl accident, all the liquidators were awarded medals. The government es-

tablished a fund for them. On the 25th anniversary of the tragedy, my father was awarded the "Medal for Valor and Compassion," but he can't get his health back. Recently my father was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Meanwhile, our government doesn't do much for the liquidators. They have not received many of the privileges and payments that they were promised. When my father realized what was happening, he started to fight for his rights in court. After many years, he won and got some payments and privileges for himself. I think this situation is the same everywhere. At first,

the government needs the heroes and volunteers – and perhaps gives them medals. But then the government forgets about them.

All of the liquidators are heroes to me. They didn't think at that time about fame and medals. They went to save our lives.

We all have to be thankful for what they did. It could have ended awfully if they did not show their heroism. I

asked my father, "Would you do it again, now that you know about the consequences?" He said, "No, probably not." But then he thought about it some more, and he said, "But, if not me, then who? Someone has to do it."

For me, he always will be a hero and I am proud of him!

Valentina Kobrin is from Russia. She is married and has two sons. She is learning English at the Norwood Adult ESOL program in Norwood, MA.



This situation is the same everywhere. At first, the government needs the heroes and volunteers—and perhaps gives them medals. But then the government forgets about them.

Research this! And write about it!

What is nuclear power? Look it up at the library or on the Internet. Write an essay that describes how nuclear power works. Include diagrams if possible.

Is it safe? Explore what scientists, energy experts, and environmental groups say about nuclear power. Write an essay in which you state your opinion and back it up with evidence.

Pick your own topic related to Valentina's essay. Choose something you are interested in.

When writing, don't forget: start by reading and collecting information on your topic; then organize your information and write an outline; expect to write several drafts; include citations for your sources and use at least three sources.

Resilience Means...Bounce Back

Juan Berenguer

Before today, I wasn't even sure what the word "resilience" meant. Now I know and understand because it describes ME!

When my son was younger, I felt like I was letting him down. He wanted me to read to him, but *Green Eggs and Ham* wasn't cutting it anymore. That was one of the few books that I could tackle. I didn't want to be a failure, so I decided I needed to get back to school.

I went to school off and on for several years but this time, I'm really "working it." My teacher doesn't let me get away with memorizing; we work at putting the sounds of the letters together

to actually *read*. I always come to class *and* I practice reading at home. My wife and my son (who is in high school now) are ready to help if I need it. There are days when I am tired after a long day at work, but there is no question in my mind about whether I will be going to school or not.

My efforts are paying off. I recently applied for a better job. At the interview, I felt very different.

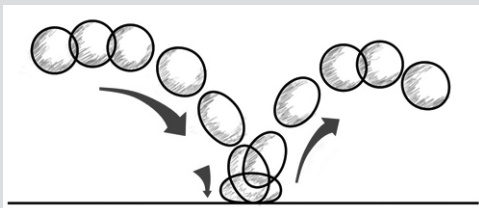
In the past, I would have been hitting the panic buttons if someone laid papers out in front of me. This time, I felt much more confident. I'm not saying that I could read everything in the documents, but I was able to make my way through all the forms. I really wanted this position and I felt good about how the interview went.

I didn't get the job. But I felt like a winner anyway. I know in my heart that I am growing and getting better. I could have let this disappointment get me down. I try to believe there is a better job that will come along for me. In the meantime, I will continue to become a better reader. I am RESILIENT and will keep on trying because Juan Berenguer knows how to bounce back!

I didn't get the job. But I felt like a winner anyway. I know in my heart that I am growing and getting better.

Bouncing Back

Use the space below to describe a time you were resilient. (Teachers: please note the "Writing with Resilience" lesson plan at <www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras>).



Juan Berenguer is taking ABE classes at the New Brunswick Public Schools Adult Learning Center in New Jersey. He is currently looking for a new job where he can demonstrate his solid work ethic. He plans to be persistent so that he can achieve his goals and much, MUCH more.



Dare to Do What You Fear

Lixia Zhou

When I came to America one year ago, I couldn't speak English, and I didn't understand what people were saying. I was scared to answer the phone. I felt my English was so bad, and I did not have the courage to face the difficulty. So I chose to avoid speaking English. I often refused invitations. I stayed at home and lived an isolated life. I was like a lost lamb. I felt lonely and defeated.

In April last year, with the help of my family, I started going to school. I remember I couldn't answer any of the questions. I was nervous when I took the entrance test. I did not understand the teacher. I was afraid to chat with my classmates. I felt that most of my classmates' English was better than mine. Looking at them chat with each other, I envied them and hated myself.

I knew that I must change my life. So, I made a plan for myself. Every day I got up at 7AM and read an English book out loud. I used the dictionary if I couldn't understand some of the new words. I wrote the new words down in my notebook.

Gradually, I could understand what the teacher said, and I could speak with people more easily. I felt my English was progressing. Because of a conflict

with my schedule, I could only go to class one day each week.

So I asked

my teacher to give me homework and I would finish it by myself. I felt my confidence was growing. I wasn't scared to speak English anymore. To practice my English, my friend asked if I would teach Yoga. I felt the joy of success when my Yoga students told me that they enjoyed my class. This strengthened my confidence. A couple of weeks later, I passed the test to enter the advanced English class. I knew that I would face new and difficult challenges. I must be brave to face them.

There is a saying, "Dare to do what you fear. It is good medicine for restoring confidence." This is good advice. It worked for me. I won't avoid the difficult things anymore. I will become useful, and able to help and serve English-speaking people.

I felt my English was so bad, and I did not have the courage to face the difficulty. I felt lonely and defeated.

Find Ways to Practice!

Here are some more things Lixia Zhou did to improve her English. Put a check in the box if it's a strategy you can try. Add your own strategies at the bottom.

- ☐ She tried to memorize 20 words every day.
- ☐ She wrote in her diary.
- ☐ She watched English-language movies.
- ☐ She faced the mirror and repeated English words.
- ☐ She started speaking in the class and with other people.

☐ _____

☐ _____

Lixia Zhou, originally from China, is an ESL Student at the Amsterdam Literacy Zone in Amsterdam, NY.



The Earthquake in Haiti

Wilner and Myrlaine's Story

Myrlaine Mervil

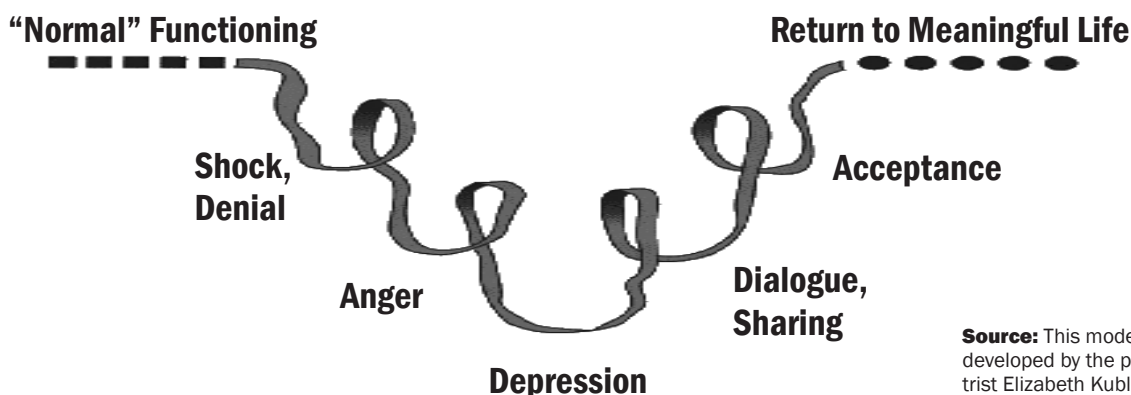
When the earthquake happened, I was at school. My classmates came to me and said, "Myrlaine, we had an earthquake in Haiti." Two days later, I still hadn't heard from my husband. I thought if he survived, he would call me. A few days later my husband's cousin called. She said, "Myrlaine, you should know what happened." She told me my husband died in the earthquake. Then everybody started calling. They asked how I was doing.

I couldn't believe my husband was dead. We had planned to meet in a few months. Suddenly, I felt depressed. I cried every day. My husband and I had a good relationship. He loved me so much and I loved him, too. He was a wonderful man.

On the day before the earthquake, he called me and said, "Milou, I will call you tomorrow because my cell phone's battery is low." He said to me, "I love you." Then the next day, he died. Those were the last words left to me. I couldn't imagine it. I felt too bad. The worst part was they didn't find his body. I don't know where he is. I lost my husband, and I miss him. This story is so bad, but it helps me to tell it. It is Wilner and Myrlaine's story. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to write about it.

Myrlaine Mervil is a student at Jewish Vocational Services in Boston, MA. She has lived in the U.S. for seven years and she works as a home health aide.

Five Stages of Grief



Source: This model was developed by the psychiatrist Elizabeth Kubler-Ross.

Take it Further

Describe what you see in the model above. What do you think of it? Which stages does Myrlaine share in her story?

Read a story by Maki Aida about earthquakes in Japan: <www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras>.

Of special interest to teachers: Alice Nelson shares her strategies for supporting students as they cope with the tragedy of the earthquake. See <www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras>.

A Fire Brings Me Closer to my Neighbors

Mary Kamanda

In the cold winter of 2008, there was a fire in my apartment building. I was already in bed when I smelled smoke coming into my apartment. I ran to my neighbors to inform them about the fire. While they were running down the stairs, I decided to go upstairs to tell the others. When I came back down I saw a thick black smoke. I was afraid to keep going. I was trapped!

I decided to go back to my apartment to use the fire escape. I was afraid to go down the fire exit but somebody came to help me. I was shaking, but he told me, "Don't be afraid." He assured me that I was in good hands. He took me slowly down the fire escape.

During this time, the firefighters came and put out the fire. We were not allowed to return to our apartments because of the dangers of smoke and water on the floors. They told us to wait for the cleaning team to do their job. I was worried. I knew I was in trouble because without shoes, hat, gloves and slippers, I might get sick. I stood

outside in the cold, dark night. I felt sick and I started shivering. A lady saw me shivering and she went to her house to get me some towels, socks, hat, and a hot cup of tea. Thanks to her, I did not get sick.

Neighbors around me prayed for me. They told me everything was going to be all right.

The people who helped me during my difficult time were very caring. They were my guiding angels. Their generosity, prayers, and encouraging words made me felt better. I was able to come out of this even stronger and closer to my neighbors.



Mary Kamanda is a student at the Mid-Manhattan Learning Center #5 in New York City. She is from Sierra Leone, Africa. She goes to school to learn more and to get her GED; she has a diploma from her country. Mary enjoys photography and other crafts.

My Community Helped My Family

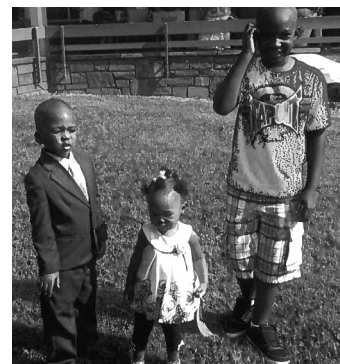
Mamadou Balde

A few years ago, I had a hard time. It was Saturday night. A neighbor knocked on my door. He told us the building was on fire. My wife and I picked up our children and ran out of the building. If we had waited two minutes, we might not have survived. Our apartment burned. We lost everything we had. It was a difficult situation.

I got a lot of help from the community. My son was in first grade at the Fonda School. The school collected money, clothes, and gift cards for my family. The church helped with food and a new apartment.

Because of the support of my community, things are back to normal.

Mamadou Balde, originally from Guinea, came to the U.S. in 2004. He is a student at the Amsterdam Literacy Zone in Amsterdam, NY, and he became a citizen on July 4, 2012. In the photo: his three children.



Robbers and Cops

Brian Horne

When I was growing up, I played robbers and cops.
I say it like that because I never wanted to be a cop.
As a kid I never was arrested.
As an adult I would never have guessed it.
Anyhow, I learned my lesson.
And they say life is full of blessings.
You're not like me.
I'm not like you,
Just bad luck I ran into.
One mistake and you're locked up doing time.
But even in jail you can free your mind.
I'm a fan of "a mind is a terrible thing to waste."
Here with all these stone cold killas I face.
Everywhere that I've been I persevere.
All alone left to fend on my own.
My soul is so grown.
My outlook of home ain't home.
Time to say goodbye to the bad guy,
And hi to the new Bri guy.
Never a cop not a crook,
Just someone ready to have a new outlook.
In living life wrong or right good or bad
You have to see what you had
To realize what you want to have.
I strive to get a GED with pride
And continue to learn to live without the crime.
In order to succeed you need an education and a dream
And you have to be able to adapt faster than it seems.
Only thing is that to make it out there
You have to follow the rules like in here.
Knowledge can take you anywhere in life you want to go.
You are in control.
Just know life is easier
On the straight and narrow.
The more you know, the better you grow
To be as big as you dream.
You know what I mean.



Brian Horne currently lives and studies in Massachusetts. He loves construction, blacktop, and concrete. He plans on starting up his own construction business in Virginia.

“Be as Big as You Dream”

Cynthia Peters

In Brian Horne’s poem (on p. 48), he talks about being “as big as you dream.” Think about someone (it could be you or anyone you know) who has a dream. Write the name of the person and the dream in the space given below. In the chart, write down some ideas about how the person could make their dream come true, what the person’s family could do, and what the community could do.

NAME _____ DREAM _____

What could the individual do?	What can family and friends do?	What can the community do?



Another way to do this exercise is to make a “root cause” tree. Draw a tree. Label the leaves with the dreams and goals you have for yourself. Label the roots with all the elements you need to make your dreams and goals a reality. Make sure to include elements from the three categories in the chart – things you can do, things your family and friends can do, and things your community can do.

Cynthia Peters is the editor of The Change Agent.

Such a Heavy Load

Morrigan Phillips

Some Stress is Normal

Each time we respond to stress our body produces hormones and activates our neural or neuroendocrine systems. This helps us cope and respond to the stress. Normal fluctuation in these stress hormones is expected and indeed beneficial. A healthy physiological stress response is essential to alerting our minds and bodies to stressful situations, thoughts, and feelings. But over time these same responses can damage our bodies.

Frequent activation of the stress response hormones creates what is referred to as the allostatic load. This is a term used to explain the cumulative damaging consequence of chronic heightened stress response on the body. The allostatic load is a measure of the chemical imbalances in the nervous system, immune system, and particularly the cardiovascular system. A high allostatic load can even lead to changes in brain structure.

Too Much Stress is Harmful

Research has found that people with higher allostatic loads have worse long-term health outcomes than people with lower allostatic loads. Furthermore, people of color have higher allostatic loads, leading to higher incidence of certain diseases like heart disease and breast cancer. A higher allostatic load also leads to poorer maternal health, lower weight babies, and more premature births. The fundamental inequalities in our society make it much harder for some people to be resilient because they are using up a lot of their resiliency resources just making it through each day.

Racism is Stressful

Research has found that when all things are held equal (education, income, diet, etc.) people of color are still more likely to have a higher allostatic load and worse health outcomes as a result than their

white counterparts. Perhaps most troubling is that this pattern holds true even when all things are not equal.

A white woman with little educational attainment and a low income is still more likely to have better health outcomes than a black woman with high educational attainment and a higher income.

Allostatic load helps us understand how race and racism can be bad for the health of people of color. The bottom line is: racism is stressful. What are some of the everyday ways people of color might experience racism? Here are a few:

Driving While Black

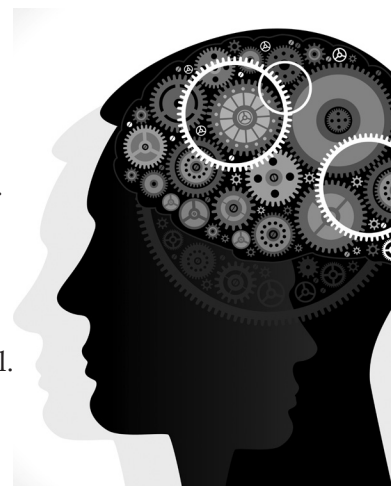
A government report found that blacks and Hispanics were three times as likely to be searched during a traffic stop, blacks were twice as likely to be arrested, and blacks were nearly four times as likely to experience the threat or use of force during interactions with the police.

Racial Wealth Gap

White median household net worth is about \$90,000; in contrast it is only about \$8,000 for the median Latino household and a mere \$6,000 for the median black household. This is true despite the fact that black families save money at a higher rate than white families.

Health Inequalities

Only 68% of Hispanics and 79% of blacks have health insurance while 88% of whites have coverage. Members of racial and ethnic minority populations are more likely than whites to have poor health and to die prematurely.



What Can We Do?

People of color live with more fear of police, less financial cushion, and poorer health than white people. Many social services are aimed at getting resources and opportunities to underserved populations. But these resources may not be able to overcome health disparities and long-term health outcomes for people of color. Seeing the effects of living with the stress of racism, it seems clear that it is not enough to provide services or programs. We also need to explicitly challenge racism, which hurts on many levels, including physically.

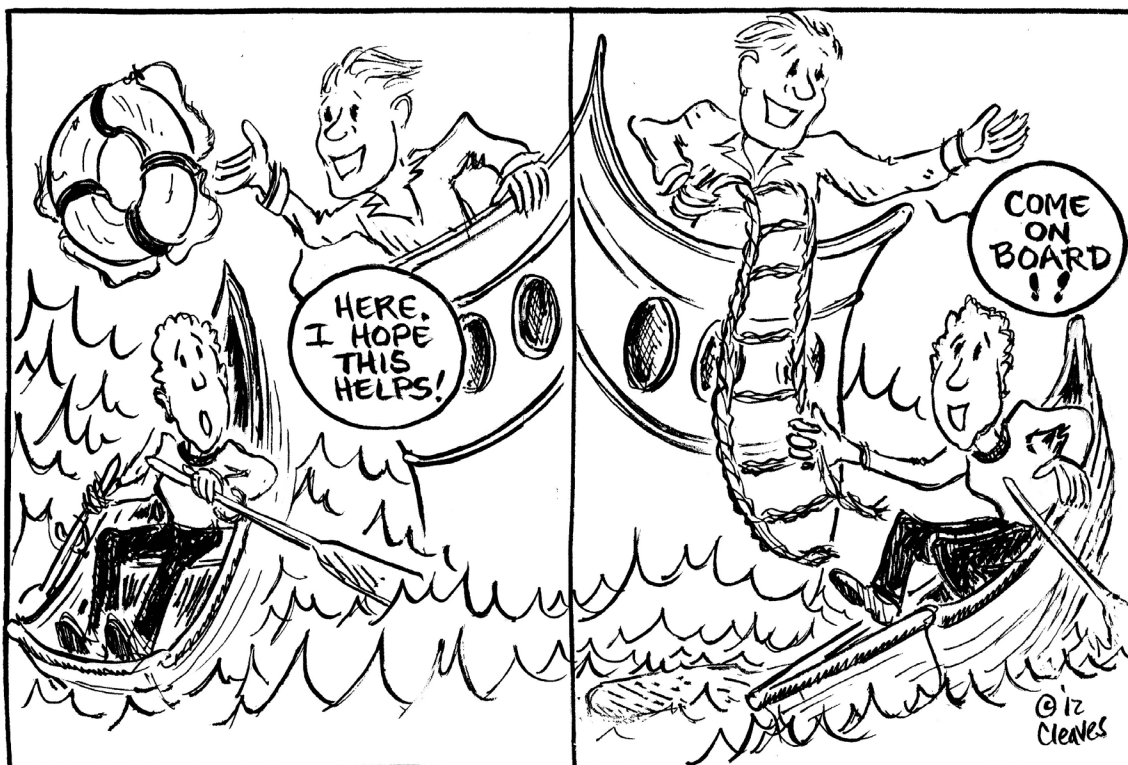
Police should be held accountable for racial profiling. We should address the racial wealth gap with educational and financial supports for families of color. Universal health care would help address health disparities, but we should also pay

attention to the special health needs of communities of color. And there are many other ways we could address racism and other “isms” that cause a higher allostatic load in certain groups.

Humans are resilient. Indeed, our brains are wired to respond to stress in productive ways. But too much stress is bad for your health, and because of problems like racism, sexism, and poverty in society, some people are burdened with a higher allostatic load than others.

Morrigan Phillips is an HIV/AIDS social worker and organizer in Boston, MA. She works with Survivors Inc./Mass. Welfare Rights Union and other groups fighting for economic justice.

Sources: <www.aclu.org/racial-justice/departments-justice-statistics-show-clear-pattern-racial-profiling>; <prospect.org/article/race-wealth-and-intergenerational-poverty>; <www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/12/disparities_factsheet.html>; <www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dach/chhep/disparities.htm>.



Describe what you see in the illustration. Which strategy is more likely to decrease the chronic stress (or allostatic load) of the person in the small boat?

What is one thing your community does to decrease community members' stress? And what is one thing your community could do better?

I Was 59 When I Said, “I Want to Learn To Read”

Terry Terflinger

Multiple Head Injuries

There are three major head traumas I can remember in my life that hurt my ability to learn. The first was when I was five years old. I was walking on top of an old wooden bridge and I fell 25 feet off the edge onto a dry creek bed. I was in a coma and I got 152 stitches in my face. They said it was a miracle I lived. The second time I hurt my head was in the third grade. I was walking along a brick wall, tried to jump across the gate, and fell head-first into the concrete. I was unconscious for three days. The third head trauma I had was when I was in 5th grade. I was on a skateboard and my brother pulled it. I fell backwards onto the corner of the porch. It split open my head.

Quitting School and Finding Work

I didn't do well in school. I was held back in fourth grade. The other kids mocked me and teased me, and that got worse each year. In junior high, they put me in a class of kids with disabilities. I became a fighter. When kids teased me I would fight them, so I spent a lot of time in the principal's office.

Then I got fed up with it. I quit school at age 15. I went to work and lied about my age. I worked hard all my life and I learned by asking questions. My grandfather told me, “The only dumb question is the question you don't ask.” I

started asking. I'm a visual learner and a hands-on learner. People would show me how to do things and I learned by watching them. I worked in restaurants washing dishes and mopping floors. I worked in a factory too. I worked my way up. I was dedicated to what I did. I just worked and worked and got better jobs a little bit at a time.

My brother taught me how to drive an 18-wheeler. It was hard to do a log book. It was hard to read a road atlas. But I learned, and now I've run a truck for 28 years and have gone 5 million miles, all around the country.

“I Can't Read”

The federal government changed the Commercial Driver's License tests, so the questions went from 25 questions to 158, all in paragraphs! I took a week off and my wife drilled me for days. It took me 4.5 hours to take the test and I failed. I told the examiner I couldn't read. She had me re-test by listening to a cassette, and I scored 98 percent!

Then I got a disease called Meniere's disease. It causes vertigo and dizziness. It meant I would



never drive again. Tests done by a neurologist showed that I had damage to my brain. My wife helped me file for disability status with Social Security. They sent me to see a psychologist. He couldn't believe how I'd compensated for not being able to read. The psychologist was just overwhelmed at all I've accomplished despite my disabilities. In 2005, I won my case and got Social Security.

Finally Learning to Read at the Age of 60

In 2008, I moved to Oklahoma and got into a literacy program. The coordinator asked me what I wanted to get out of the program, and I said, "I want to learn to read!" I was 59 years old and had never read a book in my life. After she tested me, she said it was clear that I was an "overcomer" because of the things I've accomplished in my life despite not being able to read. I've bought and sold homes (without a real estate agent), sold stocks and bonds, and learned from Christian financial counseling how to manage my life. The Lord's been good to me.

I have a tutor, Catherine Blakley, and this woman is wonderful. She gives her life to help me four hours a week and she's brought me a long way. I read at a fifth grade level,

and I've read seven books. I am just overwhelmed. I learned to read at the age of 60! I am so blessed. I read everything I see now. I learned how to work a computer and can email, search the Internet, and read the news.

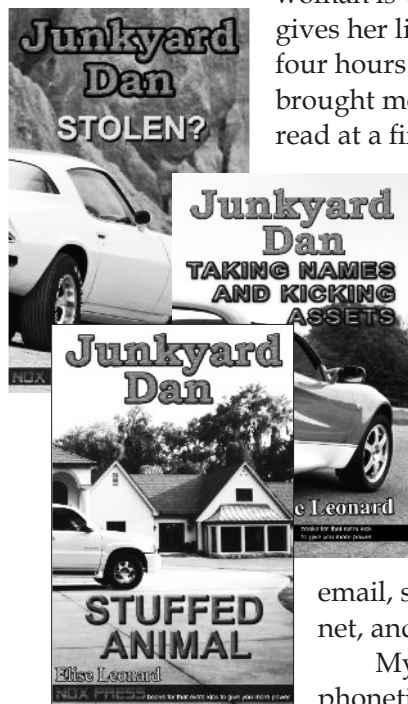
My spelling is phonetic. I write how the

words sound, and I've done it all my life. We have to re-program my brain so that I can learn how to spell right. I'm up to second grade in spelling. My reading comprehension is ninth or tenth grade. I really like these Junkyard Dan books I've been reading. I was Outstanding Student of the Year for the Oklahoma Literacy Conference a year after I moved to Oklahoma. They put my picture in the paper, and now I am a student representative on the board of the Oklahoma Literacy Coalition.

Be Persistent! Don't Be Embarrassed!

Oklahoma is the fifth lowest in the nation for literacy. Adults are afraid to tell their stories but there's help out there for you. I am living proof of that. Try to learn and challenge yourself, don't just sit back and say, "I don't know how." Through the public library there are facilities that can help. You can accomplish all things. You just have to have faith and be persistent. Don't be embarrassed.

Terry Terflinger is a student in the Bartlesville, Oklahoma, Literacy Program. He volunteers in the community with Bartlesville Area Habitat for Humanity and Mary Martha's Outreach Center. He currently serves on the board of the Oklahoma Literacy Coalition as the student liaison.



Resilience in Action!

List some of the ways the author has shown resilience:



2013
U.S. Conference on Adult Literacy™

Join us at the U.S. Conference on Adult Literacy (USCAL)

October 31-November 2, 2013 | Washington, D.C.

- More than 25 conference partners
- Ideal for teachers and tutors, adult learners, volunteers, and administrators
- A rich lineup of workshops and speakers covering these areas:
 - Social Justice
 - Workforce Training and Career Pathways
 - Fundraising
 - Citizenship Education
 - Health Literacy
 - Financial Literacy
 - Technology and Digital Literacy
 - Public Policy and Advocacy Concerns

The special Social Justice strand will recognize literacy as a human right and the connections between literacy, social justice, and social change.

**Call for proposals will be available September 2012 at www.USCAL.org.
THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS IS DECEMBER 10, 2012.**

100 Voices

Help us reach our goal of bringing 100 adult learners to USCAL!

To nominate an adult learner or contribute to the sponsorship fund, please contact Dave Whitaker, senior director for strategic initiatives at ProLiteracy, at dwhitaker@proliteracy.org or (315) 214-7028.

REGISTER NOW!

November 8-9, 2012
(with a pre-conference on Nov. 7)

The sixth national conference on Effective Transitions in Adult Education will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Providence, RI.



The two-day conference will focus on strategies and promising practices that help adult learners succeed in post-secondary education and training.

Email us at nctn@worlded.org if you have any questions. Look for more information at www.collegetransition.org. Sponsored by the National College Transition Network at World Education.

What's Cooking at TV411?



TV411 is a free online resource for adults working on the GED.

Visit

TV411.ORG

for hundreds of
videos & activities
on

♦ **Reading** ♦ **Writing** ♦
♦ **Math** ♦ **Science** ♦

Teachers, check out the lesson plans and ask us about our free webinars.

✉ TV411@edc.org



Tune in to Learning
TV411.ORG

Change Agent CALL FOR ARTICLES

THEME: Good Jobs, Not Just Any Jobs!

Many adults are attending school to get the skills they need to get a better job. In this issue, *The Change Agent* will ask: What is a good job? We invite you to share your story! Use *one or two* of the following writing prompts to guide your writing:

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Write about a good job you have had. What made it good? Be specific.
- Write about a bad job you have had. What made it bad? Be specific.
- What is an ideal job for you? Describe what it would look like, what skills you would need for it, and what your compensation would be.
- Describe a time you advocated for yourself to make your job better. What did you do? What happened?
- Describe a time you joined with others to advocate for something in your workplace. What were you advocating for? Did you win? What was it like to work with others for change? What did you learn from it?
- In your experience, who makes decisions about what the workplace is like—how workers are treated, how much they are paid, etc.? Who should make those decisions?
- When you look around at your neighborhood, your community (or the world!), what do you think needs to be done? What sorts of jobs would help meet the needs you identify?
- How much should work preparation be the focus of education?

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: November 5, 2012. Make sure to include contact information. Send your submissions to: cpeters@worlded.org. Please submit illustrations, cartoons, and graphics on this theme too! The complete “call for articles” is at www.nelrc.org/changeagent.



YES, I want to subscribe!
Sign me up and bill me.

- ☐ I'd like to receive a 1-year subscription (2 issues) to The Change Agent for \$10.
- ☐ I'd like to receive a 2-year subscription (4 issues) to The Change Agent for \$18.
- ☐ I'd like to receive a 1-year bulk subscription (set of 25 copies) for \$75 (two years \$150); 20% more for Canadian orders.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Tel. _____

Email _____

Send to:

Change Agent Subscriptions, World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210.

Or order by phone 617-482-9485 or online: www.nelrc.org/changeagent/subscribe.htm.