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Grade 12 students at St. Michael's Adult High School were invited to participate in the Windstoria/Windstoria project. These are their stories. First, though, they had questions: "What should we write about?" "Who would be interested in *our* stories?" and "Are our stories worth telling?"

The stories in this collection are the end result of a process of introspection, sharing, writing – and telling. It was in the telling of these stories that a bond was formed. As one woman put it later, reflecting on the process, "When I heard my classmates' stories, I felt closer to them. I felt we had become friends." One young man described the experience this way: "I was just going to make up a story about ghosts or vampires. That didn't work, so I decided to look at the broken part of my heart. It was scary, but I found my story there."

These stories share some personal experiences of growing up, leaving home, coming to a new place, working, finding one's way in the world. They demonstrate the power of naming your experience, putting it in words, telling your story. They also demonstrate, as one woman later told me, that *everyone's* story is worth telling.

Mireille Coral
Grade 12 teacher, St. Michael's School

Coming to Windsor

Where Should I live? Hmm... How about Windsor!

I have always lived in different places. At the age of 2, I moved to Canada from Guyana. By the age of fifteen, I took the reins into my own hands. Not cause my folks didn't love me but because I was 15, and as we all know, at 15 the world is run by our control; living at your friends' house sounds way better than living at your parents' house. You're convinced that parents have no clue what they are talking about; they are from the land before time and let me not forget: I was 15 which is 1 year away from 16, which makes me pretty much an adult and invincible against any and all harm in the world. At least that's what I thought.

From 15 – 21, I moved around from different states in America to different cities in Canada free as a bird. Everything I owned could fit in suitcases. I thought it was fabulous at the time but my mother, she didn't. She was constantly in my ear about finding some stability. "I will when I am ready," I would tell her. So after living in Miami, New York, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, I only lived in a city for a few years at the max. There are a few others cities I possibly left out but you get it! I've been around if you know what I mean!

After having my fair share of life experiences I figure maybe the lieutenant (a.k.a my mother) is right, that maybe at 21 it's time to form some roots somewhere, but where? That's the question. So I thought about it and asked myself some questions. Knowing that I wanted to still travel for long periods of time, I also wanted to be able to come home and still have things in my house. I also wanted to be in a small city but close to a big city, and I was only willing to buy, not rent. With all of that in mind, I chose Windsor.

People always say what is it about Windsor, but they only say that now. They weren't saying that 12years ago when they put all their eggs in one basket (the automotive). Okay, so the

one basket with everything in it gets a hole and we ditch the place that was so good to everyone who lived here at one point? NO! I disagree. I think we should patch the basket, invest in another basket. Now we have two, which is enough to learn from our mistakes.

Let me add that Windsor is not just some small dump. Windsor is the most southern city in Canada. We get the best summers, we have the most border crossings and we are closest to America. We have so much room to expand. We have that small city feel with the big city amenities and, might I add, the great house prices. I dare you to argue that one!

Okay, so Windsor needs a little TLC and it's suffering from a little malnutrition. So how about we look at the great foundation we still have and get up, count our losses and contribute to rebuilding our small but wonderful, hardworking, blue collar city; but how about this time we do it right and show the non-believers that we can and will rebuild Windsor with all the survivors who have lived through the biggest wind city storm (the loss of the big three).

We might be down but we definitely aren't out.

By :Jossette Hayles

A Big Smack of Reality

Prior to me coming back to Windsor, I lived in Georgia for about 5 years. That's where I met my husband and had our son. We left Georgia due to certain living situations and we drove to Canada in hopes of starting a new life here. Unfortunately, they would not let my husband across the border due to a misdemeanor DUI he has. So I ended up staying in Windsor with our son for about 3 months to get my paperwork in order while he drove to New York to stay with his brother. While I was here, I experienced a lot of stress. My aunt had me paying half of her

rent, I was sleeping on the floor with my son at her house, my husband was not here with us, and C.A.S. got involved with me because I had gotten a ride from a person who's no stranger to the law. I was under a lot of stress and pressure living in Windsor for those 3 months. Finally, I got my paperwork in order, got my passport, and went to New York to marry my husband. I stayed in New York with my husband and our son for 6 months and I loved it.

My experience coming back to Windsor the second time was a bad one. I stayed in a hotel for about 2 weeks with my son. It was blistering cold outside; it was the dead of winter. I wasn't familiar with any of my family members here, so I didn't have anyone to help me out. I stayed in a hotel and I applied for Ontario Works so that I could get some financial assistance and get an apartment for me and my son. I was stressed out during the whole process of applying for Ontario Works, and being involved with C.A.S. The lady who was handling my file for Ontario Works gave me a very hard time. She would accuse me of lying about having a place to live, and she would say things like I'm enjoying my stay in the hotel. She thought I didn't really need financial assistance and that I was going to go back to the States. She would have me walk in the cold while it was snowing outside and the weather was bad to hand in papers she needed.

I understand she needed the papers to process my application, but she could have been more compassionate and waited until the weather improved a bit. I'd been away from Windsor for so many years. I wanted to come back as an adult and start a new life here. Prior to my coming back, I was hoping for stability and help. Unfortunately, I got the opposite. I got a big smack of reality right in my face. My husband always told me that Canada is not a fairy tale land; you have to have a plan because without one you will fail. Me being young and naïve, I did not listen to him. I came here in hopes of something totally different than what I actually got.

Nevertheless, I got my apartment, I'm back in school, our son goes to daycare, and my husband will be here soon. Things are starting to look up for us than when we first got here.

By: Ceyora Taylor-Paul

Windsor Changed My life

Many things can change your life in many ways. For me one city made a difference in my life: Windsor. Windsor, Ontario is a small city located in southern Canada. The change in my life began in this small city.

Before my family and I moved to Canada, we lived in Nairobi, Kenya where I grew up. My nationality is Ethiopian. I was born in Ethiopia. Being Ethiopian and growing up in Nairobi wasn't that easy. One thing that I know about Kenya is that if you have money, you are treated like an angel. However, if you don't have money you are treated like an animal. It was a good thing that my family wasn't that poor. I have many painful memories back in Nairobi. Thanks to my new city my painful memories are gone.

When I was about to come here, I heard many negative things about this country. I had been told that if I come here I would turn into a slave. This made me scared the most. However, when I got here I found out everything they told me was a lie. Of course, there were many different things in this country such as people and the life style. I remember the first day I went to McDonald's, I saw a girl wearing something like shorts and a cropped top. I was shocked. I had never seen people walking around half naked before. I couldn't believe my eyes, and I asked myself who on earth made those type of clothes. Unfortunately, I get used to it after a few months. Months passed when I saw the most shocking thing. I was walking on the street with my friend when I first find out about homosexuality. At first, two men were holding hands, but after

a few minutes, they kissed! I was so surprised, my jaw dropped and I couldn't stop looking at them. My friend pinched me and told me to stop looking at them. That shocking moment remained in my system till this day. I had never seen nor heard about homosexuality. Of course, I had seen guys walking like girls and act like a girl, but I had never seen guys liking guys.

Not long after that incident, I met a man who was a homosexual, and he was so friendly and kind. He explained everything to me about homosexuality, and how homosexuals are treated. I was shocked with his story, but I couldn't understand why a man like himself would like another man, and I asked myself many questions. However, I kept those questions to myself. Thanks to him, now I have a full understanding of homosexuality. My knowledge began thanks to the people who live in this city. I started to learn basic things and those surprised me the most.

I started going to high school where I learned how to read and write. As you can see, I am still learning. High school wasn't that easy for me since I didn't know how to speak English. Even though school was difficult for me, many people helped me in many ways. When I first started school, it was kind of scary since I didn't know anyone, but there were people there who were once new comers like I was. They understood and helped me; I felt happy and wanted at that school. My teachers were there for me when I needed help.

People from this city helped me fight through my difficulties. Wherever I go in this city, I believe the people of this city are with me and I trust them. After going to regular high school for about three years, I was told to move to adult high school. At first I was sad because I didn't want to leave my friends. However, as time passed by I met new people who had very interesting stories. The school got very interesting and I liked my new school. I waited for so long to hear powerful stories. Back in regular high school, you will not able to hear nice stories about people's lives. This is because people from adult high school lived longer than others and they

know better about life. Their stories get my attention. Most of their stories are about how they faced difficult times in their lives. The more I listen to their stories about their difficult moments in their lives, the more I understand the difficulties in this world. This helped me a lot because I always thought that I was the only person who faced difficulties.

Thanks to the knowledge I now have, I know I am not the only one who had difficult times in my life. Step by step my knowledge improved and I began to have a dream. A city is nothing without people, and people are the ones who make the city a better place. The people in this city changed my life. This city might seem just like a very small city, but to me this city is big. This city helped me and hopefully one day I will help them, too.

By: Mandarina Adem

I'm All About That Windsor!

I came from Viet Nam. After April 30, 1975, Viet Nam became a communist country. Like other communist countries, the Vietnamese government is run by the military. Most of the people in the government know how to kill, but they do not know how to read or write. In Viet Nam, human rights such as freedom of speech and religious freedom are not known. You are only allowed to talk about whatever the government wants you to talk about. So 50,000 people from Vietnam became refugees; they later became known as the "Boat People." Many settled in Canada

I had a chance which many Vietnamese did not have: the chance to leave and come to Canada (sponsored by my husband). Before I came to Windsor, I had a happy family with my parents, two sisters and one brother. My dad was a successful businessman. Still, I left my country for a chance at freedom. Now I'm very happy to become a Windsorite. The year when I

came to the city of Windsor, the Big 3 (GM, Ford, Chrysler) were still here. There were still good paying jobs, but my husband and I put that all aside, and focused on our family. Family was our top priority. I gave birth to my three beautiful children and raised them in Windsor. I never had a chance to work for money. My husband wanted me to go back to school, so now everyday I'm happy here at St Michael to learn English. My husband was one of the many boat people to come to Canada, sponsored by the government. In my family, only my husband works and he works 2 jobs to support our family. It is really hard, but we survive.

During the time I have been here I have seen and heard the following:

Many churches have been closed or sold.

This is a city of many cemeteries.

This is a city of many different kinds of houses.

This is the city with the highest unemployment.

Windsor has some problems, but I do not want to leave. In Vietnam, I lived in a big city- Ho Chi Minh City and life in a big city is complicated. Windsor is small, but everything is here. I love and enjoy my life in Windsor; I gave birth to my children and raised them here. Windsor is a good place to stay and it is a beautiful medium sized city. It has an affordable cost of living, it is next to the border, and at least we do not have to get stuck in traffic for hours. We have OHIP like other cities in Ontario do, and compared to our neighbour in Detroit, that is a good thing.

If you have a chance to leave a country where you become worried every time you go to church, that your life is not safe because you believe in a different religion, you take that chance. In my old country you do not have any rights, not even the right to be a human being. I am here in the city of Windsor, part of the great country of Canada. Thanks to the people here before us

who fought for our freedom, we are blessed. So Windsor can be better or worse; it is all up to us. The people who live in Windsor can make it better or worse.

By: Trang Pham

What We Hoped for Before We Came to Windsor

When I came to Windsor, at that time I was so scared, worried, shy, and nervous. We came to Windsor from Nepal. We did not know anything about Windsor. We had family in Windsor who came before us, but they did not tell us about Windsor. My family had a lot of dreams about Windsor. When we came to Windsor we looked around; at that time, our dreams disappeared. We expected something else. Windsor was different from what we were expecting. When we were in Nepal, a lot of other friends went to other countries and they talked about their city and we also thought Windsor would be the same as other cities, but it was not like what they told us. Windsor had no tall buildings. People lived in small houses. We thought there would be swimming pools and gardens; instead, we saw cars, apartment buildings, and small houses. My family worried a lot because we were small and my parents did not know how to speak English. My parents thought about our future. What will happen? They didn't know if Windsor was a nice city and we could stay safe or not. That kind of thinking was coming into my parents' minds.

The Canadian government provided us some people to help us. Those people helped us to find a house and they took us to different malls to buy some things. They taught us and showed us; then we knew from that day how to buy something from the mall.

Day by day we stayed in the apartment with my family, but for one year we got a lot of problems in our life. We stayed on the second floor of our apartment building, and our neighbourhood had bad people. They always blamed our family for noise. They made noise in their apartments and they always complained about us. One person in particular thought we

disturbed them, and he always came to our apartment and told us a lot of things; at that time we were scared because we were new at that time. Every day, he came to our house and complained. It was really bad for us when that person complained about my family.

My family decided we could not stay like this, and we thought we better inform someone who can help us. There was a place in Windsor where we could share our problems, and my dad went to that place with someone who spoke English and he told all our problems to them. They tried to determine who was at fault, but, on the advice of my sister, we informed the police. When the police came to our house, at that time we were scared. When we were in Nepal, if the police came to our house, at that time, we had a lot of problems; first the police would start by beating the person without asking anything. Only after that did they try to talk with that person. That is actually how the Nepalese police try to solve the problem. In same way we thought Canadian police were also like the Nepalese police, but instead it was different. The Canadian police solved the problem more easily than the Nepalese police. The Canadian police solved the problem without knowing any other people; that is the best thing I know about the Canadian police.

The police came to our house and found out whose fault it was that there was noise. The police knew after a few days that my neighbour was at fault. After, that person knew we informed the police and he left his apartment. We always worried about our neighbourhood. When we came to Windsor, we faced lot of problems for one year. We cried a lot at that time because my parents did not know how to speak English, and we kids were in high school during the day time. It was such a difficult time for my family. We could not talk to each other loudly inside of our own house. When our neighbour left his home, we lived happily because there was

no longer any one to say how noisy we were; from that day, we never had any kind of problem in our home. We stayed there happily because we knew Windsor would be better than before.

Days passed and we were in Windsor with my whole family for almost 4 years. We knew Windsor now. My sister worked in the multicultural council and she knew a lot of things, and we learned some English also from high school. Now we do not have any kind of difficulty in our family because if somebody does something like that again, then we know where we have to go to solve the problem.

I am quite a shy girl in my house, but my sister is so confident talking with all people. That is why she solved our problem, because she knows a lot of people from that office and she has quite a lot of ideas with them. Now my whole family loves Windsor because we have stayed a long time in Windsor and it is a nice place for my family. We got a better education in Windsor, also a better life in Windsor. We decided that we would never leave Windsor whatever problems came in our family. In Windsor, there is the Detroit River and we could go there and spend our whole time there also. We enjoy our holidays with my family in Windsor by playing in parks and going to malls. We are such a lucky family because we had a chance to come to Windsor and change our life style. Now we have a happy life in Windsor with my family; we always stay outside of our house and other neighbours come there and we talk to each other and share our feelings for each other. That is what we hoped for before we came to Windsor.

By: Lila Dhungana

Coming From Another Place

It Is Important For Me To Tell You What Iraqis Are Really Like

Windsor is a good place to live in Canada. Everything is cheaper, like stores and houses if you want to rent or buy. Here in Windsor there are different cultures. For me, I didn't see a big difference between here and Baghdad: a lot of Iraqi people are here. There are Iraqi stores; you can find anything you want. The weather here is cool, not like other cities in Canada. I live in Windsor, near downtown. I have a beautiful neighborhood. People are very friendly and helpful. I'm still going to school to improve my English. The key for success is language, especially for us, because English is a second language.

Here, the most important thing is follow the rules, and laws. The law is the same for everyone. Men and women are equal under the law. However, my life in Windsor is not perfect. One problem that I have is that people in Windsor don't really know the truth of Iraqis and Baghdad. They think we are like terrorists, but we aren't like that. Maybe the government is bad, but not the people. For this reason, it is important for me to tell you what Iraqis are really like, and what Baghdad was like before the war of 2003.

Let me tell you about the Baghdad of my youth. First of all, history and background: Baghdad is the capital of the Republic of Iraq. The population of Baghdad (as of 2011) is approximately 7,216,040 making it the largest city in Iraq, and the second largest city in the Middle East after Cairo, Egypt. Baghdad is located along the Tigris River. The city was founded in the 8th century and became the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate. Throughout the high Middle

Ages, Baghdad was considered to be the largest city in the world with an estimated population of 1,200,000 people. According to some archeologists, it was the first city to reach a population over one million. Unfortunately, Baghdad was destroyed at the hand of the Mongol Empire.

The city has often faced severe infrastructure damage, most recently, in 2003.

The city has been frequently subjected to insurgency attacks. In 2012, Baghdad was listed as one of the least hospitable place in the world to live. I don't know why all that happened to my city. The politicians are corrupt and don't care about people. They only care about how to be billionaires. Before 2003, it was a hard life, but people were happy and safe. Then, Iraq was under a siege. The United States put that siege on Iraq after the war of 1991. From 1991 to 2003, Iraq was in a good condition; the government was very good, the factories were working, and the transportation system was good; even the infrastructure was good. It was a safe place to live. I could come home after the midnight, and people were living in peace and happiness.

Unfortunately, all that happiness and peace were gone after war of 2003. People thought life was going to change. It's true; life changed, but for the worse, and people found life hard. Some of them left the city and others left the whole country. The government started stealing money from people and letting groups of terrorists enter the country and create the sectarianism and that caused people to kill each other. The worst year was 2006 when the killing was on! In 2007, I left Baghdad because of this bad situation and went to Syria. Then I came to Canada. I hope one day I'll go back to my lovely city.

Worst of All: I Find Myself Back in High School!

My journey to Canada began in the summer of 2012 when I met my husband during his visit to my country (Iran). It was a very exciting and unique experience. One week after that, my husband had to go back to Canada and there were a few months of a really beautiful exchanging of email messages, and phone calls. The next time he came back to Iran, he met my family and it was obvious we were meant for each other. Seven months after that, he again returned to Canada and came back to Iran for a third time. We got married, and when he returned to Canada he applied for my visa and it took eight months for me to get here. I finally arrived in July of 2013.

I came to Canada to be with my husband. I did not come here because of the political situation in my country or the economic opportunities here. I never in my life actually wanted to leave my country. I had to say goodbye to all that was dear and familiar and set off for a land and culture I knew nothing about. I wondered what was going to happen to me in the new country. How would I make friends again? How would I understand the culture and people? How could I live so far away from all of the people I knew and loved? So many thoughts occupied my mind but one thing that I was sure of was that I loved my husband and I wanted to spend the rest of my life with him.

When I first set foot in Canada as an immigrant, my initial reaction was that of excitement and, at times, elation. However, as I began to discover new things about Canada, the excitement shifted to feelings of uncertainty, confusion, and shock about how to deal with the changes I was experiencing. I have faced a few challenges during the two years that I've been living in Canada. Some of these challenges are learning English with the correct accent, fitting in so that I could make more friends, understanding the Canadian culture, finding a job, and continuing my education.

I graduated with a Master's degree in cellular and molecular biology in Iran, and I had planned to continue my education and receive my Ph.D., but all of Canada's universities need English degrees. Not only are my qualifications not being recognized, but – worst of all – I find myself back in high school! I have also applied for many jobs but have yet to receive a response. I believe it's because I am from Iran and the companies perhaps don't know anything about my qualifications. During these two years I have met many people in similar situations. I met one woman; her name is Sepideh, and she is here with her husband and younger daughter. She is a symbol of a successful person for me, and she was a trained physician in Iran. She moved to Toronto at first, and she has described her life for me and told me that when she first moved to Canada she did not speak English well, and they ran out of their savings within a few months. Her husband has a Master's degree in Chemistry from Iran, but worked as a labourer here. She went from one medical office to another searching for work; while she was looking for work, she took classes to improve her English and eventually found a job as a cashier, in a drug store. Although this helped her family's finances and gave her an opportunity to work on her language skills, her health was suffering when things started to change. She visited a doctor and she described her symptoms with precise medical terminology. The doctor asked her if she was a nurse and she replied "No, I am a doctor." The doctor told her that he knew exactly what was wrong with her, that stress was affecting her health. The doctor directed Sepideh to join a special licencing program; she applied and was accepted in 2003 and completed the program over the next four years. She had since moved to Windsor with her family. Her husband is working on his Ph.D., and she has a busy practice.

I am always optimistic for the future. I know that anyone who travels outside the confines of his/her country would have a hard time adjusting in one way or another but I need time to overcome the difficulties that I have had.

By: Paria Kahnamoei

Coming to Windsor

When I picked up my pen to write about coming to Windsor, the first thing that crossed my mind was, “Is my life in Windsor even worth writing about? Where should I start?” Let me start from the beginning. I am Eritrean, but I have never been in Eritrea. In my life, Eritrea was at war. After the war finished, a dictatorship controlled the country. It's a government like the one in North Korea. No one can travel without permission, and all men from age 15 to 50 are serving in the military. It's unpaid service for an unlimited period. That is why my father and my mother left Eritrea. I was born in Saudi Arabia. My father was working there. We stayed there as temporary residents under his permit. After that, my father moved to United Arab Emirates for another job offer. We went with him and I lived in U.A.E under my father's temporary residence permit.

I lived my whole life in U.A.E, until I finished my high school. After that, I explored because I was under my father's temporary residence; I had to leave the country. After that I went to Syria to study. I signed up at Aleppo University. I have a law degree from the University of Aleppo. I made a lot of friends, a lot of memories, and I learned a lot of things during my university years. Actually, I'm very sad about what is happening to Syria today. Why are these

peaceful multicultural people fighting each other? I hope this crazy war finishes, and they focus on rebuilding their country from all this massive destruction.

But also this time, I had to leave after I graduated. The only place I knew well was U.A.E. I made some contacts with my old friends. They helped me to get a visitor's visa for one month. My big challenge was to find a job in this short period, especially since I was a fresh graduate. My goal was to find a job to transfer my visitor's visa to a work visa. If I couldn't find a job, I would have to leave to Eritrea. WOW! I couldn't imagine this.

I tried hard for three weeks to find work, and I got the chance to join a law firm in Abu Dhabi. I changed my status from visitor's visa to temporary residence. Temporary residence again: All this was happening to me because of a dictator government in my country. I hated politics. Why does it change people's lives? I started my work in this law firm; after that, I had an opportunity to find another job. I worked as a legal assistant in a bank. Although the work was hard, I really enjoyed the work.

Unfortunately U.A.E was trying to reduce the number of foreign workers in its labour force. Companies were under pressure to replace their foreign workers with Emirati nationals. After that, I was given notice of my termination. That meant I was going to be deported to Eritrea. Oh my God! They will take me to military services! It's unpaid, for an unlimited period! Maybe I will die, or they will force me to kill someone. In that moment, I decided to apply for a visa to Canada.

I always heard about Canada: the country, the weather, the people, and the peace. I was lucky to get the visa. Finally, I was going to change my temporary residence to permanent residence in a safe country.

Honestly, I didn't have any background about the work and study environment in Canada. Also, I didn't have a close relative who could provide me with information. I decided to move on and explore Canada, anyway. I arrived in Canada on Victoria Day through Toronto airport. Everything was perfect. I stayed one week in Toronto.

After that I called an old friend. I didn't know where he lived. After I surprised him, he told me that he was living in Windsor. Without hesitation, the next day I traveled to Windsor by Greyhound bus. I stayed with him for some days, and I decided to start a new life in Windsor. Actually, the most important thing to me was to find a cheap apartment and to start learning English.

That's why I chose Windsor. It's a small city; you will not need a car; the school is near my apartment. I can get a driver's licence easily. The most beautiful thing in the city is the Detroit River. It's like a lounge to the city and the view is amazing.

At the same time, I tried to understand the mentality of the people and the employment opportunities. But I was shocked with the number of Canadian unemployed people. I tried to send my C.V to some companies; maybe I was going to find a job. But to be honest with myself, again, I didn't have any Canadian experience to be qualified for competition in the labour market. So I tried to improve myself, and get some Canadian certificates. I found that I should start from the bottom. My law degree was not acceptable. I signed up for high school.

Coming back to school has presented a lot of challenges. I chose to come to Canada. I'm very thankful to have this chance. In any start, there are always a lot of challenges.

I'm not from those people who like to blame their situation. My decision is to be positive and focus on the bright side being an adult going back to school and starting again. Learning is accessible and available for all in Windsor.

By: Mohamed Mussa

The Karen Village Where I Lived Was a Very Beautiful Village

I used to sit on the bank of the Detroit River in the morning for the whole day, from the morning till evening. I watched the river and the cars that went by on the other side of the river. I enjoyed the beautiful view from Windsor, but I was lost in thought and in another world. I hated Tha Shwe, the Burmese president, the Burmese military regime, and the soldiers. Burma is a dictatorship. Why did they attack our beautiful village? They are pieces of shit. I questioned myself: Why is this world full of conflict? Why do people invent things such as guns and bombs? Why does this world replace love with war?

The Karen village where I lived was located in the south of Burma. It was a very beautiful village surrounded by green lands and a friendly environment. Most of the Karen villagers were kind, friendly, uneducated, and farmers. They lived peacefully and full of kind hospitality. In the middle of the village, there was a clinic and an elementary school. After graduating from elementary school, the kids had to go to the city to continue high school. Then the day of darkness and the bitter day had arrived; in early 1997, the Burmese army entered and attacked our village, and they decided to burn and destroy the village, as well. They built new buildings and factories for their own benefit.

The villagers had no weapons so we couldn't do anything to fight back, and many Karen people had been shot and killed. The remaining villagers, included my father's family, had fled the village to escape the killing, torture, and rape, of the Burmese army. The villagers had to cross rivers, mountains, and a thick jungle. We suffered starvation. Years passed. We kept going and we finally arrived in a refugee camp called "Maeramoe" camp, located in the border of Thailand and Burma, administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

We went to Thailand, where we lived in a refugee camp. By the grace of God and with support from UNHCR and other organizations such as Thailand Burmese Border Consortium (TBBC) and Aide

Medical International (AMI), my parents finally built our house. The UNHCR gave us bamboo and leaves to build our house. All the houses in the camp were made from bamboos and leaves. Unfortunately, they didn't give us enough leaves and bamboos. Therefore, we had to make a three-hour walk up to the mountain to get more leaves. It took three days to fill one basket with leaves, so we slept in the mountains for 3 days. It was dangerous because soldiers were in the forests in the mountains, but we had to do it. It was a difficult life as we got only main foods such as rice and salt. Most Karen people are subsistence farmers, living in small mountain villages, and growing rice and vegetables and then raising animals. Many of us kids went to school together, and we were so happy when we got free note books from school. Schools in camp were supported by the Karen Education Department (KED).

There are about 140,000 Karen refugees living in camps in Thailand and about 50, 000 Karen refugees have been resettled in America, Canada, Australia, and some European countries. We built a house and lived that way until 2010. In 2009, the Canadian government told the UNHCR in Thai refugee camps that Canada was accepting refugees. Many people applied, but not everyone was accepted. My family and some of my friends were accepted.

We arrived in Canada on April, 23, 2010. I had never imagined coming to Canada, and I never knew how Canada would be. When I first arrived in Canada, everything was different from my home, for example, houses, buildings, education, weather, people, and many more differences. Back in the refugee camp, when I went to school, I didn't have any materials such as pencils, pens, papers, books, computers, etc. We walked to school every day, and it took us about 45 minutes to get to school. Even during hot weather, raining weather, and winter time, we enjoyed going to school. I remember the hardship in the refugee camp and everything was different when I came to Canada.

Canada changed my life for the better. Even though I currently live in Canada, I have the opportunity to keep my culture and religion. Cities in Canada are totally different from home. Life is not easy for my parents, because they don't speak English, and everything is new for them. Every time when they have an appointment, they need help, because of the language. In Canada, parents have the right to go to school and learn a new language and make friends with other people from different countries. Back

in the refugee camp, parents didn't have the right to continue high school after they got married, but in Canada parents have an opportunity to go to school and communicate with other groups. My parents never wished to come to Canada, because they needed skills, but my parents know that kids can develop for the future. My brother, sisters, cousins and I are enjoying living in Canada. We feel safe in Canada, because there is no more war to face.

Back in the refugee camp, we didn't have technological things to use. Everything was different from back home. In Canada, we get to eat many fruits that we never saw or ate before, back home. Finally technology tools such as phone, Face book, Skype, Gmail, and Viber are useful things that allow us to contact each other from both far and near places. Canada is a wonderful country and we have freedom to live.

By: Eh Do Wah

True Life Stories

I Want My Heroes Back

As a young child growing up in Windsor, Ontario I was told by my parents and teachers that the police are here to help and protect us. To me, they were my heroes, someone to look up to and maybe one day become. In my early teens, however, I witnessed strange behavior on the part of the police which I didn't really understand. I would see the police stop my brother after coming from a store to ask him for a receipt. One afternoon, the police stopped me and my boyfriend and asked us where we were going, our names, and for our identification; then they told us to don't get in any trouble and to have a good day.

As I became older, I started to see things more clearly. My childhood heroes were no longer that to me. Instead, I had a tightening feeling in my stomach every time I saw a police car. It was fear. Even though I knew that I was doing nothing wrong, I feared that the police would harass me. I had by then seen them harass many people, even people who are close to me. Most of the people who I knew who have been harassed by the police are in poverty areas, minorities, and people with mental disabilities. I once saw some police officers at a Mac's store parking lot punching and kicking a developmentally delayed young man from my neighbourhood. I don't

know why the police approached him, but I do know that he was co-operating with them. The young man was handcuffed lying on the ground while they beat him. While getting attention from neighbours gathering, the police were yelling at the neighbours to go into their homes. As one lady was taking pictures, a police officer told her she'd better erase them. The police then came together and some of the neighbours overheard them say, "Let's get our story straight."

I couldn't believe what was going on in front of my very own eyes. It hurt me to think that the people we put on a pedestal could turn out to be so cruel. I had seen and heard of many stories concerning police brutality, some too upsetting to talk about. The most traumatic experience that I have endured is when my oldest son who is a visible minority with developmental delays and suffers clinical depression, came home badly beaten by the police in a case of mistaken identity. After the police realized they had the wrong guy, they said to my son, "You probably deserved it for something, anyways." My son had a boot print on the side of his face. I was furious and upset as I called the police to make a complaint. The officer on the phone told me that my son needed to come down to the station and file a complaint. My son was scared to do so, fearing that it would only make matters worse and that he would be further harassed and assaulted by the police. Therefore, we didn't pursue it.

Many times, I have been in downtown Windsor and have seen the police harassing the homeless, stopping young black men for no apparent reason, and talking to people in a disrespectful manner, especially if they seemed to have mental disabilities.

I'm writing about my experiences not to belittle or say that all police officers are this way, for there are many great and heroic police officers out there. I have had many personal experiences with some of Windsor's finest who have helped me with some much needed matters. I just want to emphasize the need to do something about the police who do take it upon

themselves to behave in such a horrific manner and to get them the help they need in dealing with such a stressful job. The police need to relate to the people in the community and to earn back the trust and respect.

That is how to make our city a great place to live: when we know how to recognize the good guy from the bad. I'm tired of feeling tightening of my stomach when I see a police car. That's when I need to feel safe and relaxed. I want my heroes back.

By: Maxine Green

Finding My Way

Well, I quit school at 17 and started working. When I went to school there was always a thug or two bothering me to prove their toughness and so I quit. I started working at United Parcel Service. U.P.S: under paid slaves – that's what I used to say it stood for. It wasn't much easier than school.

I had to be there at 8am. I remember at the beginning my supervisor calling me at home every morning asking if I was coming in? I was usually asleep, but when he called I was on the go. There were goons there too: big play ground. Like I said, it wasn't much easier than school. I had to load and unload trucks. Sometimes it got so busy I couldn't keep up. Christmas was so busy at U.P.S. that I don't even want to think about it. The company being so big internationally, it had many opportunities for advancement, but I didn't have a grade 12. So I went to night school, but with all the partying I just wasn't dedicated then. I was making good money, and I was young. I wasn't thinking of the future, so I quit again.

The years passed and I found myself thinking, "I need to move up in this company." The union offered jobs for drivers and jobs in management were offered at their choice, and I was an

awesome worker with high seniority, but again – grade 12 needed and no way around it. I watched many part-time students come and go. I was in my seventh year and third highest in seniority out of about 50 workers. I worked three shifts if I wanted. Company man with no grade 12: smart as a whip, but held back by a piece of paper. It bothered me so much, I was determined to finish and advance myself. One day the guys I started work with as a group, they all went to work at Chrysler. “They’re hiring, John; come with us.” I said “No, I like my job here.” But the truth was that piece of paper haunting me again. Chrysler, yes; more money and a real union, not that I needed them. At that time, my friends all got jobs.

I was beginning to understand what the older guys were saying about being a lifer here. I started to hate my job. Took Wednesday off, every Wednesday. The supervisors knew to replace me before I called. It got to be they knew. “John’s day off.” It happened to be the slowest day, shipments delayed and just less volume. I knew that place so well it was like sleep walking when I got there. Automatic. I was the best loader and the quickest. I didn’t need another guy in the truck. Some of the other workers were lazy, moved like robots and paced themselves so they didn’t break a sweat. So one day I said “fuck it.” I’ll go slow, too. Leave the heavy packages on the shelves, too. With my seniority, take all the easy jobs. Now the supervisor always requested me to load because I didn’t build false walls and I was just plain fast. That is, I loaded a tight shipment. Truckers know a load like that doesn’t shift and cause the truck unnecessary movement which could cause the truck to jack knife, especially in the winter. I asked, because of my seniority, to do the easier jobs like release packages from the warehouse shelves, so that I could hide like 20 other guys they got pretending to work on the shift. Not all workers did this, but the supervisors except Jeff were dumb and couldn’t see people just walking fast and looking concerned. So funny. Really, these guys (but not all) thought it was great to slack off, but really

it was just passing the buck, and sooner or later somebody would have to pick up that slack. That's when my supervisors, or "stupidvisors," started telling me to load. I said, "No, not my day." "We need you loading." I said, "No, loaded yesterday," and mostly all week I said, "No." Oh, refusal to work? They got the office on my case. I couldn't believe it. I asked for a union steward, but no one and no help. Kevin pushed papers in front of me. Basically, if I didn't work he would make me sign dismissal papers. The one time I needed the union: still makes me laugh today. Well, I had a new Jeep and had payments to keep, so I pushed the papers aside and went to the loading dock.

I was seriously shocked. Looking back, I can see that I was younger and they actually gave me what I really wanted: to quit and go find my way. So I did just that. I quit. I had Jeep payments but it felt right to leave anyways.

The next day I went to the Bricklayers Union. The first thing they did was ask me if I was Italian. When I told them my last name, the head of the union, Lou, said, "I've heard that name before. Did your father lay bricks?" I said, "Yeah, blocks." Lou said, "Okay, I'll give you a chance. I'll move you from job to job, but don't quit. And don't go pushing your own wheelbarrow!" I took that to mean that I shouldn't start my own business once I learned the trade. True to his word, he did move me from job to job around the city of Windsor. It was tough – I learned what I could here or there, but it was tough. I was just thankful to have a job, though.

At the Ford plant on Seminole, I worked for a company called Artisan. I worked for them for one day. I really hustled to get my work done that day because I wanted to watch the masons. I was an apprentice bricklayer. I had done some firewalls in high rises, but nothing like these guys. Their work could be seen by anyone passing by. These guys were perfectionists, real

craftsmen. My father had told me that if I had a chance I should watch them work. Hell, it brought tears to my eyes.

Then, as I was watching the bricklayers, enthralled with their work, from out of nowhere a supervisor put his arm around my shoulders and said, "Come with me." He pointed to a big white Chevy truck. "That's the boss," he told me. "Go." I went for a ride. I didn't say anything, strange for me. I just thought, "Another job to go to." We went to South Wood Lakes. "Come on," he said. We ended up at his house. Big home: the brick work was awesome. I always had the eye. I always knew bad from good even when I couldn't achieve it myself. I did the best I could and I knew when it just couldn't get better. Anyhow, I went with him to the side door basement office. He sat behind his desk and said, "This is the big time; you're not ready. Go work for a small company." He handed me a cheque.

Now, Lou told me not to quit; he'd move me around. But something told me to do what this guy said, so, again, I went to find my way. I learned the labouring jobs very well, I worked for a small company. Fifteen years passed. I learned hard work.

Now that I'm older, I am seeking that piece of paper. I'm at the age where I should be supervising. What I have to say now to all who are young is recognize when you have a dream because, good or bad, people – they don't mean to, but they'll lead you astray. Stick to your goals and someday your dreams may come true. As for me, I'll be finding my way.

By: John Di Cecco

Know them by playing with them.

Do you have kids? Do you know how to deal with them? Do you have trouble understanding your kids?

For a lot of people, parenting requires a number of responsibilities. Everyone's experience is unique. Parents should be close to their children, and sometimes parents should get down to their children's age to understand what is going on with them. Parents should be friends with their children.

I have a seven year old son who was born in Windsor. He is an expert with "why" questions. He loves to talk, loves to play, and he doesn't have any problems making friends. He has his own world, so if he becomes upset or somebody bothers him, it is not easy for him to tell or talk about it.

My son started school in 2011. For the first two years, he was good, excited, and was waking up by himself every day before the alarm went off to go to school. Last year, after the first two months of school, I saw some changes in his attitude, and he said to me that he doesn't like school and doesn't want to go to there anymore; he even started to be late waking up in the morning. His marks and his report card became bad. At the beginning, I thought he was having problems understanding the lessons in class, or he was seeing his friends understanding the lessons better than him. I called the school and made an appointment with his teacher. When I went there to the appointment, I asked the teacher if my son has any problem understanding the lesson, or if he is slower than his friends in the class. "No, he's good and smart. He has the ability to catch the ideas really quickly", she told me, but my son kept telling me that he didn't like to be in school and maybe that was the reason why his marks started to become bad.

We finished at school; on the way home, I was thinking what is wrong with my son? What are the problems that made him be this way, and his mark become so bad? Why is his attitude so bad these days?

We got home; we sat down together for almost three hours, and we talked about why he didn't like school. All I got from him was "I don't like school because I don't like it!" I tried many ways to understand the problem, but nothing worked.

After a couple of weeks, we were playing, enjoying our time together, and having fun in his room; he started to crawl and act like a baby so I called him "Baby." This word bothered him a lot; he got angry and upset, and started to yell at me. He told me "I don't like you anymore." Then he went to another room. I went after him to see why he did that; at the beginning, I apologized to him and promised him that I wouldn't say it again if this word bothered him, and explained to him that I didn't hurt him on purpose. He calmed down after a couple of hugs and kisses. I started to talk to him and asked him why the word "baby" bothered him that much and got him so angry. He said "because I don't like it." Not a word again.

An hour later we got back to play; at the beginning the reason behind playing was to know why he didn't like the word "baby," so we started to play a game called "question and answer." During playing, and when it was his turn, he started to ask about God: "If God loves us, will God take me if I do something bad or bother anybody, or even if I tell the teacher about my friend when they do something bad or bother me?" I stopped for a minute to think of a good answer; then I told him "If you are telling the truth without any lying, God is not going to do anything bad to you or to me." Even though I answered his question, I was thinking there had to be something behind these interesting questions. I had to know it.

At the beginning, I wanted to know why he didn't like me to call him "baby"; then, I wanted to know why he asked these questions about God. So when it was my turn to ask, I started to ask him some general questions about his toys and his room; then I asked him about the word "baby", and I started like this.

Me: You know, I love when my mom calls me baby; I don't know why you don't like this word.

Him: Because.

Me: Because of what?

Him: Because one of my friends always tells me "You are a baby," it doesn't matter what I do.

Me: Did you tell your teacher?

Him: No

Me: But you know if anything is bothering you at school you have to tell your teacher, so why don't you tell her?

Him: Because my friend told me, that if I say anything about anybody to anybody else, God is going to stop loving you, and he is going to take your mom away from you, and I love you mom, and I don't want God to take you from me.

Me: You know that is not true!?!

I explained to him more about God, that if anything is bothering him at school, he has to tell his teacher, and he shouldn't hate school just because of something that someone said to him; he should go to school to learn more so he can be a doctor - as he says he wants to be- in the future.

I went to the school next day; I talked to his teacher about these things that are bothering him at school. The teacher was shocked and asked me, "Why he didn't say anything to me?" I explained to her why. The teacher talked to my son and his friend. His friend admitted everything. His reason was because he wanted to play with my son, but my son was always playing soccer with the older kids and this kid is short, so he couldn't play with them.

The teacher talked to the boy's parents and told them what happened; then she separated the kids and told them that they are not allowed to come close to each other.

After we solved this problem, my son started to wake up in the morning by himself to go to school, and he got back to improve his marks again.

It was a good experience to learn a new way to know about my son's problem better.

From that day until now and in the future, I'm going to follow this structure with my son to know everything about him.

To know about your kid's problem and to solve it, sometimes you just have to be friends with them, play with them, come closer to their age so you can think like them, look at the world from their eyes, and put yourself in their place; just walk in their shoes.

By: Razane Hayek

Glimmer of Hope

My name is Isabella. I'm 27 years old. I'd love to share one of my life stories with you! I was born in 1988 in a quiet city called Windsor. My parents were an estranged couple, but I have two brothers from them. They got divorced when I was 2 days old. My mom left us when I was 4 days old.

My dad's family took care of me every month at my aunt's house. My dad got remarried when I was 7 months old.

I moved in with my oldest aunt, and I stayed at her place until she had a big fight with her husband. They fought because she took care of me more than she had to. After the fight, my aunt and her husband had to send me to my dad's house. I was two and a half years old.

My dad's mother wasn't happy at all to see me there. She wasn't that nice a person; my brothers and I used to be her slaves: no love, no care, and always alone. We were not allowed to visit people or have people visit us. And my dad used to be busy at work.

We grew up under my stepmother's mercy. Until my grandmother moved to my father's house, she wanted to make sure we were have a normal life.

Then, from nowhere, my real mother decided to come and meet her daughter and 2 sons. I was 15 years old. I loved the idea of meeting my real mother; I always waited for something new to enter my sad life. Unfortunately, the visit didn't change anything in my life.

After my mother left, my brothers and I went back home; I found out that my brothers were everything in my life.

My dad used to fight with us a lot. We have never been friends with him. And for any reason that made him angry, he came to us and started hassling us. One day, I had a big fight with my father. He gave me no choice: I had to run away from my "happy house." I thought I could go to my mother's house in London although I didn't know where she lived or her phone number. I wanted to find her and stay with her and feel some of the motherly love that I never had.

I went to the bus station. I didn't know how much it would cost me to go to London. All that I had was \$26, and the cost for the trip was \$45. I sat on the sidewalk crying and laughing at the same time until a middle aged man came to me and said: "I'm Juan, and I can tell you're not OK. What's your story?"

I couldn't tell him my real story. I said, "I'm going to my aunt's in London, but don't have enough money, and there's nowhere else to go."

He stood up and said, "Well, my child, I can help you."

After a few minutes, he came back with a ticket to London and some food for me. And he said, "The bus will leave here after 2 hours. Take care of yourself." And then he gave me his business card; he said, "Call me whenever you need anything."

I thanked him. And I walked with him to his bus, and wished him a nice and safe trip.

I got on my bus. Here, my new journey began. I arrived in London. I didn't know how I could contact my mom or how to get to her place.

I went to a park called Thames Park close to the Thames River. It was a very quiet night; no one was there. I walked to the beach and lay down on the sand. I put my knapsack under my head until I fell asleep.

I woke up around 6 a.m. when the sun started to rise; it was very beautiful to watch. Yet, I realized that I had no place to go, no food to eat, and I didn't have money to buy anything. I went to the public washroom, to change my clothes. I found \$200 in my backpack with a small note: "Think of me as your big brother; let me know if you need anything." It was from Juan. He must have put the note and the money there when I went to the washroom at the station in Windsor. I felt very happy and very hopeful.

After I went to a small restaurant to get something to eat, I asked the owner if he could give me a job. And I asked him if he had a room where I could stay for a while till I found my mom's place. He started asking me questions about my family, where I came from, and more. After I answered all his questions, he decided to help me. He told me I could stay with his mom for a while and work at the restaurant. I started working as a waitress.

I met a young man at the restaurant; he said to me, "Your face is kind of familiar to me. Where are you from?" I answered him, "I'm from Windsor. Excuse me, I have to go back to work."

It was very hard for me to live this life. So I decided to call Juan. I called him and told him the truth that I couldn't stay there any longer. He was living in Sarnia at that time. He said, "I'll come and pick you up as soon as I can."

My family in Windsor was worried about me. They called my mom and asked her if I came to her. My mom was at her friend's house and she told her friend about me.

After two hours, Juan picked me up and we decided to go to Sarnia. When we were almost out of London, he got a phone call; it was my mom. She asked him if she could talk to me. I took the phone and I said, "Hello?" Then my mom started yelling: "Where are you? Come back right away!" I said, "Sorry, who's this?" She said, "It's your mom! Who else do you have in London?! Come back to the restaurant now! There's a guy who will pick you up from there." I said, "How did you get this number?" She said, "I got it from the restaurant."

I said, unhappily, "OK, I'm coming."

Juan said, "It's for the best." Then he drove me back to the restaurant. The guy who was waiting for me was the same guy who I met at the restaurant. Then he said, "I knew your face was familiar to me!" He continued, "Your mom is my neighbour. She told my sister and my sister told me. Then I remembered you and I told them what you look like." We arrived at my mom's house and I thanked Juan, and I promised to stay in touch with him.

My mom called my dad and told him I was at her place safe and sound. And she would bring me back after I stayed with her for a while.

I stayed with my mom for 10 days. I met my siblings; we were very much alike. I felt happy to have a mother. Unfortunately, I didn't feel she was my mother. But, that's another story.

Life is a trip full of adventures. We always have to have faith and hope.

By: Kamillo Almosa

Based on a true story

My name is Feras. I am 25 years old. I was born on the 31st of December in 1989 in Tripoli, Libya. I am the oldest of 5 children. I moved to Windsor to be with my family in 2011. At that time, I had not seen my family for 13 years.

I lived in Libya with my uncles, aunts, and grandparents from the time I was born until 2011. My family went to Canada for a visit in 1999 and they left and then they decided to move here, because it's a great country and a good place to live and to build a future for me. My parents did their best to bring me to Canada but all the ways were blocked. They got accepted by the immigration officials of Windsor to live in Canada. My family was so happy and looking for the next step in requesting me to be with them. I was 9 years old when my parents left for Canada; I stayed with my grandfather in Tripoli the first two years. He was wealthy and had communication with people in the government.

Court time: The judge refused my file. It was a big disappointment for my parents; they got lost and did not know what to do. In the meantime the dictatorship heard about my dad's story, that he wants to live in Canada. It was a big deal back then, at the time of the dictator, Moammar Gadhafi. So the Libyan Secret Service started sending letters to the Canadian immigration that they should send my parents back home. They accused my dad of not appreciating his life in Libya, and he should be punished for that. At the same time, the Secret Service came to my granddad's house looking for me, so they can use me against my dad, but my granddad already knew about that from his communications in the government. I was only 10

years old, so I stopped school for one year: no playing outside or anything that might bring attention, till I moved away from Tripoli to my mom's family in the west of Libya, a place called Zuwarah, a small beach town where everybody knew each other. This would bring less attention to me. My parents lost hope in getting me to Canada and they decided to go back to Libya. But human rights activists advised my dad not to return to Libya, because there is a risk to his life in there after all these letters. My family decided to have another child, hoping that it may help their case in bringing me back to their life so they had my brothers: Sohel in 2000, and Sefax in 2002.

They had Hesham in 2004, but this one was a little different; he was born sick. It's like it was meant to be that I was not going to see him in this life. He was really sick. A lot of the famous baby doctors in the hospital in London said the only way to save his life is to have a blood sample that genetically matches. A blood sample from one of the family members could re-create bone marrow. But, like I told you, it was not meant to be, because I was the only one in my family who matched his blood. The doctors tried their best sending letters to Immigration and the human rights even to just bring me to the airport, so they can take the blood sample and take me all the way back home on the same flight, or give me a visa to be with my family. They were processing request letters slowly and without care for the baby who was suffering. After 9 months of suffering, my soul brother left this life, leaving behind sadness, disappointment, and tears in my family's eyes. As a result of this ordeal, everyone knew my family in the city of Windsor.

Three weeks after the death of my brother, my uncle had a boy and he named him Hesham, the same as my brother's name, just to dry the tears in my mom's eyes. 2004 came and they had another brother, Adam, who is the same as me in everything.

2005 and then 2006 then 7-8-9, and I'm still alone facing life by myself. Sometimes it would take 3 to 4 months just to hear my mom and dad's voices; it was difficult to call them from Libya and for them to call me too. It was 4 dollars a minute, and the phone connection was poor. A few more years passed, and then 2011 came; I remember it like it was yesterday. It was time to change how life runs in Libya. All the country's natural resources were not for the king of Africa anymore. A revolution started, and war happened: civilians against the dictator's army. The country that feeds half of Europe from its natural resources was now boiling. It was a change that everybody was waiting for since the 42 years that the dictator ruled the country. This would be war that would take Libya out of the cage.

Even then, however, I lost hope in joining my family, but I gave myself a last chance. I thought so hard to stay alive in the war, to seek the Canadian embassy like my grandmother used to tell me when I was crying asking for my mom: "Everything my angel happens for a reason." She was right. The war came to change a lot of people's lives, and I was the first one. Yes I lived a tough life but it was an experience that not everybody can have.

And after 13 years finally I had my ticket to Canada and to live with my family again after 13 years of being away.

By: Feras Elmensouri

Windsor work field

I have a history of telling supervisors where to go and what they can do with their job. The first time this happened, it was my first time working in a factory and I was hanging car parts on a chain. According to my supervisor, there is a certain way he wanted the part hung.

Although the way I was hanging them worked, he wanted it done his way. For three days he came into my section and would yell at me and another worker. On the third day, I had enough of him coming up to me and other buddy yelling at us. I ended up throwing the part at him and told him he can shove this job up his ass. I quit and left.

Another time I was working for a power washing company and was up on the ladder. Now, myself, I'm no small guy, and someone in the neighborhood we were working in decided to make fun of my weight said some rude things. This guy must have been in his 40s but he acted like he was a teenager He was also clearly intoxicated. I looked over at him, told him to shut up, told him to go inside, or, better yet, go do something productive. He continued to insult me, and my supervisor told me to calm down and focus on our job. But with the short temper I have, I found it hard to concentrate. I ended up climbing off the ladder and approached the guy who was being rude, and I grabbed him and escorted him to his door and pushed him inside of his house then slammed the door. As I walked back to the ladder, I heard my supervisor huffing away. He was ticked. He yelled at me, said that was not a way to handle it, that I was making the company look bad. I ended up taking off my work shirt and walked off the site. A thousand words and thoughts raced through my mind as I sped off in my truck. I went and drove to the supervisor's house and waited. Upon his arrival, I hopped out of the truck and walked towards the work truck and gave him a piece of my mind. I told him I kept my calm as much as I could. I said, "You could have said something instead of sitting there with your thumb up your ass telling me to be calm! If you want me calm, then you should have said something! I'd like to see you be in the position I was in! See how you handle it!" He looked away and I said, "Yup, just what I thought." I ended up going home and after a few days of not being able to find a job I found myself going back to the power washing job, but it did not last long. Our previous falling out just

made working together again not seem right. We hardly spoke to each other, and when we did it was about work. Maybe a week went by and I decided I was better off finding a new job. At the time, I didn't care how long it would take. All I knew was that I wasn't happy working there anymore, a job at one point I loved.

I ended up packing up and left for Alberta. I came back a year later and found myself working in a green house in Leamington and do you think the job lasted? The answer to that is nope. Did I mention I have a short fuse? The supervisor I had in the greenhouse barely spoke English, and I had a hard time understanding his pronunciation and I kind of laughed at him. I tried to keep it together but the frustration in his voice and the face expression: I found it hard not to laugh. Now I'm not prejudiced nor racist, but if you move to a country and look for a job and freedom, at least learn the language of the place where you're going. But back to the story: as I laughed, he threw down his pad and pen and began to scream at me. As I begin to walk away, another supervisor waved me over and asked what happened. I was in the process of telling him what occurred, and before I could finish the other supervisor came walking up and right away yelled at me some more. I turned to the other supervisor and told him, "I'm leaving before I do something I will regret later," and then left.

By: Kyle Dorey

Do We Really Love Children?

She was born in Tecumseh, but felt so out of place. Maybe because she grew up without a father? Maybe because her mother was usually at school, work, or partying? Although she lived with her grandparents, sometimes, and her mother, she felt alone. Maybe she felt like her

home life was unstable and she never knew what to expect? She didn't know then and to this day she still isn't sure why she chose to live like this.

She woke up one cold winter morning to get ready for school and saw her mother whispering in some mysterious man's ear. He then looked at the girl and told her that her mother was right; he said he should bring her to church because the girl reminded him of Satan. Luckily, the girl had her grandparents. She called her grandfather, crying, and asked him to pick her up immediately. She went to school pretending everything was fine.

Another night she got into an argument with her mother because she was late coming home. Her mother got so angry that she took the girl's shoes and pushed her out the door. The girl was so upset and fed up that even though she wasn't wearing shoes she ran anyway. She went to her friend's house around the corner. From there she got a hold of another friend and went to stay at her house for the night. When she went to school in the morning, she saw a couple of police cars. Sure enough, they were waiting for her. The principal came to get her from first period class and escorted her to the office. She told the girl that her mother called the police because she ran away.

A woman was waiting in a little white room. When the girl walked in, she noticed the woman's pad of paper and pen. She was still writing, but briefly took her eyes off the paper to inform the girl that she worked at CAS and she was her new guardian. As the woman looked back at the pad of paper she was writing frantically on, she told the girl she was going to live at a group home called The Inn. Then the police officers came in to escort her to the Inn with a bag of clothes her mother had packed her.

The Inn seemed cold. The walls were bare. Girls were arguing with one another but stopped and became silent to stare at the girl. Although the staff did their job, they didn't seem to

care what the girl thought or felt. They fed her, gave her chores, and made sure she did her homework. She wondered why they took her from her home. She wasn't getting her emotional needs met at home or at The Inn. No one seemed to care. She even got away with more at The Inn.

The girl ran away a bunch of times. When she did she was considered "AWOL" which meant that staff had to call and notify the police. Even though she was twelve years old, she was able to get into a bar downtown called Don Cherry for a price of twenty dollars. The girl would walk right past police officers without them even acknowledging her. No one seemed to care. Not even the law. When she decided to return to the Inn they would give her an extra chore and tell her that she was to come home right after school and not allowed to go out. If that didn't stop her before, why would it then?

She often wondered why she was in a group home. What was the difference between living at home and living at The Inn? Maybe because at The Inn there was always supervision. At home, she was often alone and would get herself into trouble. Maybe her mother just didn't want her. Maybe her mother did want her but was so busy working 12 hour shifts that she didn't have the extra time to deal with the girl. Should she have made time for the girl? Was she a burden? Her dad wanted nothing to do with her. Everyone in her family seemed to give up on her. Yet still to this day they blame the girl for everything that had happened.

Now, she is an adult. Those years are behind her. Looking back, however, she is left with a series of questions. In fact, she has more questions than she has answers. She wonders: how can an innocent baby grow up into a bully, thief, and promiscuous drug abuser? Whose fault was it, really? She was also in a foster home but the foster parents are no longer allowed to foster children. Why were they allowed to before and why are they not allowed to now? CAS is set up

to help children. Why wasn't she helped? Do workers really care or do they just do their jobs to get a paycheck and go home? How does this affect children? Where are people's morals? Do we really love children in this society?

By: A. M.

Stories from our Imaginations

"Future Makers"

At a time when there was a lot of unemployment in this beautiful city, Windsor, an engineer graduated from the University of Windsor. His name was Joseph Peterson. Joseph was holding in his thoughts, ideas of the future city. He loved Windsor so much. After he graduated, he had a meeting with the mayor of Windsor, Michael Walls, and presented to him his ideas and showed him his designs. The mayor was impressed and told Joseph that he liked the ideas.

Ever since Michael Walls became mayor, he was looking for ways to develop his city and searched with all his heart for the best way to serve Windsor. Joseph and Michael became good friends after a short time.

After some small projects, which were worked on by Joseph and Michael, they started working on a new big project. The rate of the unemployed in the city was one of the highest in the province. Joseph and Michael worked together in building a plan that will reduce the unemployed rate by finding job opportunities for the citizens.

Joseph's idea was to build a new cultural center that contains a shopping mall, a theater and a big sport complex. That will include 10 stadiums for soccer, baseball, football, tennis, basketball, hockey and volley ball - 3 swimming pools in different sizes - and 2 gyms. This project was considered one of the biggest projects in Windsor. Thousands of people would be employed and earn their living. Certainly, a project like that would bring benefit for all people and visitors to the city.

It took Joseph more than three months to develop designs for this giant project. The two men started working on it which gave a lot of job opportunities for a lot of unemployed people who were glad to be a part of the new area. This project took three years. The first work was completely finished on the sports complex and the result was amazing. It was a sport complex with international standards.

Soon after, the mall and the theatre halls were completed and stores were opening. Jobs were granted for men, women, and students too. This project attracted the attention of the media from Canada and U.S. The people of Windsor liked this project so much.

The projects of Joseph and Michael didn't stop here. Joseph's next idea was to build a residential compound. It included 12 buildings and each one would have 40 apartments. The idea of this project was to make apartments with low cost rent and with a preference for the poor. The cost of this project was very large. They needed to take out a bank loan. They chose the design and the work map. They agreed with 6 engineers to pursue the work. This project was completed after 2 years of continuous work.

These successful projects made Joseph one of the best engineers in the world. Joseph was receiving requests from many countries in the world to work on many new projects.

Michael Walls became the mayor of Windsor for the second time after increasing people's confidence in him. And then Joseph and Michael began giving lectures about economics, unemployment, and the best solutions for cities in crisis. After the projects and the lectures that they made, the rate of the unemployed became 15% only.

Joseph came up with a new idea, and this time the idea was also for a huge and amazing project. The project was to build a big entertainment complex that contains a huge amusement park, a big mall, a five-star hotel, a cinema, and a big celebration hall. This project was a big

challenge because of the needs of a very big area and the huge amount of the cost. After a short period of time searching for a suitable and big space for this project, and after taking banks loans, they began working on this huge project.

Ten engineers worked on this project and more than 200 workers. They equipped the amusement park with hundreds of the latest machines. This project took three years and a half to become completed. The giant entertainment complex was opened in the presence of a large rally.

This complex was considered one of the most beautiful places in the world. After only six months, they paid all the loans that they took to create this project.

The government of Ontario liked these projects in Windsor. They honored Joseph by giving him the key to the city of Windsor. They also honored Michael by giving him the title of Good Mayor.

The two friends became world famous and received many requests to come and lecture in universities and Institutions. This period was called the golden period due to the prosperity of the city in many areas. Hundreds of new projects were created in Windsor. The rate of unemployment became about 0%. People were calling Joseph and Michael “Future Makers.”

The Future Makers began preparing for a new project that was the best ever, and it would give the name of Windsor global prestige. The idea was to create a cable car system that would connect Canada to the U.S. through Windsor and Detroit.

The basics of the project were to build a high tower which would be the base station of the cable cars, close to the entertainment complex in Windsor, and another base station tower in Detroit in a park which is near the border. In between, there would be poles every mile to link the two towers by cable cars which would take people traveling, passing over the Detroit River and the River Park.

This idea took a lot of time. It was the hardest and the most complicated project. This project needed a lot of approval from both the Canadian and the U.S governments. The project faced a lot of problems and it was rejected many times, but the insistence of the Future Makers changed the situation.

After eight long months of waiting, they got the required approvals which were on the scope of the federal governments. The Ontario Government supported the project financially.

They also considered the possibility of creating attractions along the way, such as rest stations, restaurants and shopping centres.

Many investors were interested in the cable cars project, and asked to take part in constructing and execution till the final fulfillment of the Windsor Cable Cars.

The Future Makers were thrilled from the huge offers they received and they welcomed all help.

They started working on the Cable Cars project which included the two station towers, the poles along the distance, the Cables, the huge required machines inside the towers, and the bodies.

The media accompanied the project each and every step of the stages of construction and broadcast them to the world. Teams from many channels like National Geographic joined and filmed episodes of the ongoing project.

After three years of hard work, the amazing Windsor Cable Cars project was completely ready. The Cable Cars of Windsor hosted thousands of people every day from both countries. It gave big financial benefits for both countries but Canada was the biggest beneficiary due to the important and active place of the tower of the Cable Cars inside Windsor.

The name of Windsor shone around the world and became one of the best and most popular cities in the world.

By: Sari Esihaq

The Hatred

A hundred years ago, there were two women who lived in Windsor. Sarah was the oldest; Kim was the youngest. They were poor, and lived together in an old house. Sarah was disabled. She could not move nor do anything. Kim was taking care of her. Kim was a weird person. She was stealing stuff from houses and selling it. She was enjoying doing this. Sarah did not know about her sister's "work." She thought her sister was working with a farmer. Mark was Kim's boyfriend; he motivated her to steal. He was a lazy guy who lived without working. He used to take money from Kim. He promised her that he would marry her.

They stayed together for long time. One day, Kim asked Mark, "When we are going to get married?" Mark laughed and told her, "I will never get married with someone who has an ugly face like you." He was exploiting her, and he did not love her. He told her that their relationship was over.

Kim became disappointed. Mark broke her heart badly. She came back home and she was so sad. "What is wrong with you?" Sarah said. Kim exploded and started to cry. She told her sister about everything that happened. After that, she went to her bed, but she did not sleep. She was crying and asking herself, if she really was ugly. She became so aggressive and wanted to retaliate against Mark. At midnight, she went to the kitchen and opened the drawer; she took a knife and put it in her bag. After that, she went to sleep. In the morning, she woke up and she was very normal. She prepared breakfast as usual, and sat with Sarah to eat. Sarah felt strongly, and asked her: Are you okay? She told her yes, I am. She finished her breakfast. After that, she

took her bag and went to her work. This was Sarah's thought. Mark heard the door knocking. He opened it and it was a surprise; Kim was at the door.

Kim: Hi. (with a low voice)

Mark: What are you doing here?

Kim: I really need to talk to you

Mark: I think there is nothing to talk about

He let her in. After, she started crying and screaming in his face. He was trying to calm her down. He went to the kitchen to bring her a glass of water. After he went there, she grabbed her knife and started to follow him silently. She stabbed him in the back with the knife without stopping. She started to laugh and cry at the same time. After that, she grabbed his legs, and she dragged him down to the living room. She took a shovel and she started to dig a hole in the backyard. After she finished digging the hole, she took him outside and put him in the hole. She buried him. She went back inside. She stayed there for a long time. After two hours, she went to the kitchen and she started to clean the mess that she made. She cleaned all his blood on the floor.

After she finished, she went back to her house at night time, while her sister was sleeping. She got rid of her bloody clothes and washed them. Days went by; she was acting immorally; with all that her ex-boyfriend put her through, it made her become a psycho. She started to watch all the couples she saw outside, and that made her remember about Mark. She became a killer. She killed all the men who had girlfriends. She buried them all and nobody noticed where that place was.

One day, while she was burying one of her victims in her backyard, a little boy saw her playing with a shovel, and her hands were stained with blood. He was frightened, and he ran to

tell his father. The boy's father went to the police and told them. The police came to the victim's house. They went to the backyard and they started digging a hole in the same spot, when the boy saw Kim. After a few minutes, they found a dead body. They took the boy to question him about what the woman looks like. After a brief search, the police found Kim and arrested her. They interrogated her, and she confessed.

She told them that she killed more than 10 men. They put her in jail and took her sister to a safe place. The doctors said that Kim was having mental problems, so they decided to put her in the mental hospital. Days went by, she became even crazier .After a year, Kim's body was found in her room. She hanged herself.

By: Hanin Bidaweed

