

# About You – For You

Poetry inspired by the theme from  
11<sup>th</sup> MTML Learner's Conference

by

Centre for Community Learning & Development

Academic Upgrading Learners



## Building Bridges

**B**ringing families together from near and far

**U**nites us in multicultural diversity.

**I**nternational development comes through education, business and sports

**L**ove, respect, peace, and sharing of ideas help build communities of all sorts

**D**emocracy allows for freedoms of speech and choices

**I**nterdependence means giving and getting help from each other

**N**ationality distinguishes people and nations, one from another

**G**oal setting is important to achieve our dreams of becoming a doctor or hairdresser

**B**ridges, whether social or physical, serve to connect

**R**eligious believers worship a higher power especially God or gods

**I**mportant connections help us take care of things and people, here and abroad

**D**evelopment of art, cultural activities and policies that promote organizations

**G**overnments, communities, and programs that help all, including the disabled

**E**ducation, the economy, and security of the population are important to the nations

***Survival of the fittest*** is an attitude that people depend on in challenging situations

by Hebreseb T

## Pauleen

**P**rogress Loyalty  
**A**ble Independence  
**U**nderstanding Trusting  
**L**earning Educated  
**E**ntertaining Rewarding  
**E**nergetic Appreciated  
**N**ice Capable



by Pauleen L

## My Journey, as a Quatrain

My love for literacy is so high  
New learning takes me to the sky  
Language arts, math and communications tools  
These are lessons learned in schools

by Justin K



## Journey of Beauty

Beauty is Bright  
Beauty is when we love and care for each other  
It is the beauty inside the heart, the beauty we all have as love  
Beauty on the outside is not the thing  
The thing is when beauty is on the inside  
It makes a difference in life  
When I was a young woman, I was a pretty girl  
But as time went by and age came by my outward beauty seemed to fade  
I went through many physical problems  
I felt bad and sad because they came down on me suddenly  
But I still found beauty in the world around me  
Nothing was taken away from me, but it was hard  
It was my faith in God that helped me come to terms with my condition  
I decided to go back to school at the Centre for Community Learning & Development  
I am glad for the kind teachers; now that's beautiful  
Day and night literacy makes life very good and bright  
I am happy after reading before going to sleep in the night  
Communication, Language Arts, Math and Document Use  
Brighten my day in continuous learning without any excuse  
Listening, Digital Technology, and thinking skills are key  
For bridging the gap, and success in life, for you and me  
In literacy, working with others guides us like a compass  
Together we cooperate, students and teachers in class  
I love literacy because it brings light to each life;  
Whether as a youth, mother, father, husband or wife  
We all need to keep learning and sharing knowledge  
And keep literacy high, from nursery to college



by Arjoo F

## The Bridges I Build

**B**elieve in yourself and try to  
**U**nderstand people and languages  
**I**nvest in your education, knowledge, and money  
**L**ifelong friendships with others are important  
**D**efend yourself against discrimination  
**I** say, love yourself, your family, and others  
**N**ever discriminate, and always show respect for life  
**G**ratitude in life is more important than earthly possessions

**B**eautiful is the life we have  
**R**emember your goals, and keep working  
**I**t is important to learn English and other languages  
**D**iscover great skills in work and pleasure  
**G**roup work is helpful for cooperation in good measure  
**E**ducation helps us explain ideas by ourselves clearly  
**S**peak softly and kindly to others, and treat them dearly

by Yasmin I





## Proverbs from Afar, my Language

Having travelled from Eritrea, I grew up with parables like no other  
The story must look like a story, and the son must look like his father  
When the sun shines tomorrow let her be free

When the heart beats again let it fly  
It must be clear like a midsummer night's moon; it shines like a bright star

If you respect the caravan leader, you must hold onto your camel's shoulder  
A stranger does not respect you, as a dog has no respect for the bone  
Either you respect the culture of your new country, or you leave for  
somewhere else

While you're fighting for your life, someone is digging your grave  
The beggar hates the beggar, the family hates all of them  
Someone who loves you comes while you're eating food  
Someone who hates you comes while you gossip

Afar is my language, but now English is too

When I finish my schooling, my life will be bright  
Literacy in my life is like sunshine every day  
The skills I am learning provide me with light  
After I finish my schooling, I will get a job with good pay

I came from Afar, but my journey continues in English

by Esha Y



## Wayne's Journey

My name is Wayne Bailey  
I was born in Jamaica  
I came to Canada in 1987  
They told me that I could not go to high school  
I did not know how to read and write, but I was no fool

I am trying very hard to keep up in my class  
I am still struggling with my health  
I am doing much better now  
Thanks to all literacy workers  
Because of literacy I feel good about myself  
If it weren't for learning, I don't know where I would be right now

Learning teaches me about myself  
If we try hard enough we can succeed and reach our goals  
Thank you Centre for Community Learning & Development (CCL&D).  
I am grateful for all that my teachers have taught me here  
As I continue my journey year after year

by Wayne B



## Flying High

I like my learning journey  
I learn I get to know things  
Learning helps us to become educated  
And fly freely with wings  
I feel like an eagle with a great wing span  
We learn reading, writing, oral communication  
Math, speaking, and how to get along with others  
And listening skills are important sisters and brothers  
Literacy teaches us how to behave ourselves  
I love literacy  
Now I can read many books from the shelves

by Efrata E





## **I Came a Long Way**

I came a long way  
To where I am  
Took the hardest road  
Had no clue  
It was my destiny

Kept trying to climb  
Again and again  
Then I knew  
Which way to go

I'm brighter like a star  
I know I will shine  
Some day in the skies  
Above me

I'm taking these steps  
Knowing where I'm going  
The path I'm on  
Is what I've been looking for

Creativity is in me  
To continue my journey  
I will never look back  
Forward is what I need

Important is this to me:  
Doing what I love  
I feel the joy  
Deep in my heart

I now feel secure  
To do what I love  
Have no fear

To succeed in life



by Gizman M

## I keep an open mind

I keep an open mind  
To books  
Helping me learn like a  
Blossoming flower  
Opening up like a  
Butterfly from its cocoon  
Light dancing  
In the darkness  
Mesmerizes me as its learner  
Acquiring knowledge  
Creates beauty  
Expresses seriousness  
Keeping my eyes wide open  
To new beginnings  
I keep learning  
This allows me  
To express my freedom  
Freedom for my new found goals  
Goals from my new found education  
An apprenticeship in my new found career  
A career as an electrical engineer



by Kerry L

## What will my Future be?



What will my future be?  
Ok I see yellow  
Away  
My road is full of opportunity  
Go to work  
Go shopping  
My life will be peaceful  
Like the sky is blue  
Zest for life  
For everything

By Zohirul I

## For You about You

What I have learned  
In the past two years  
Is to cope with who I am

Life has been a journey  
Not an easy one  
Walking with my head down  
Is all I've ever known  
But since going to CCL&D  
I have learnt

Having a learning disability is okay  
Having a disability doesn't mean I am stupid  
I can do what everyone else can  
It just takes me a little longer to catch on  
So now days I can say

I have learnt to cope  
I am proud of what I have achieved  
At CCL&D



by Claudette L



### **For Me, From Me**

Butterflies come to flowers  
Petals all feathered aground  
Like open book pages  
The sky  
The ocean  
All things around

Butterflies feathers like open book pages  
Flowers with petals all around the ground

People go everywhere  
Finding good story books  
My knowledge increases  
Growing like the butterfly  
I want to travel and learn in these open spaces  
Caterpillar takes lots of steps  
Changing into a butterfly  
I take lots of steps  
Changing  
If I am a Butterfly  
I thank you, God  
For my wings

by Ratneswary L

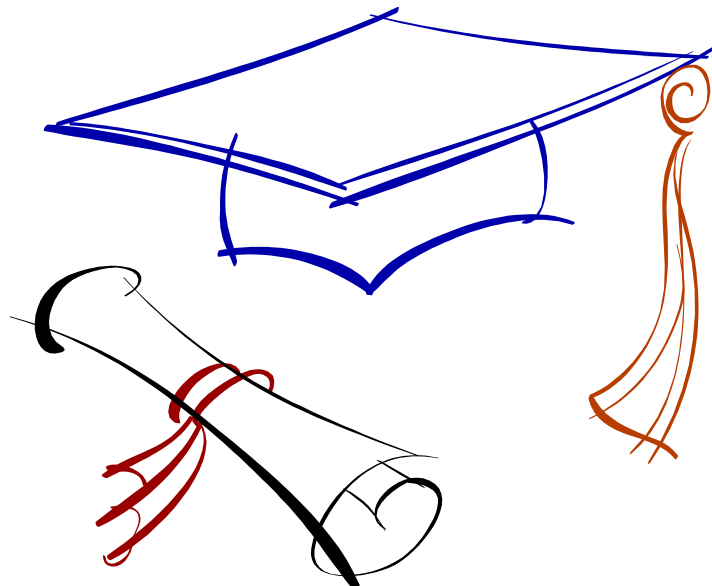
## I Want to Thank Me

What do I need to do?  
To get to be where I want to be?  
I'm a snail now, but soon I'll be a fox  
Hoping soon I'll come out my box  
The colour red is in my head  
Afraid of judgment, but dying for justice  
I've failed too many times, I feel ashamed

But I know now, if I work hard  
I have a lot to gain  
When it is all said and done  
I want to say thank you  
Thank you to those who have helped me

My learning has been complicated, for me, by me  
Soon it will be my accomplishment  
I've been waiting to see  
I want my life to be a breeze  
I want to thank me

by Janis S



## Afghanistan

Afghanistan you're my world  
You taught me love  
Your love grows in my roots  
In my veins  
Helped me to be passionate for life  
I have lots of memories grown together with you  
Your name became stars of my encouragement  
Your beautiful flowers of hope  
Taught me to live  
Proudly  
Peacefully  
Hopefully  
I am confident to share my knowledge  
To find out who I am in this big world  
To educate myself to become  
A teacher to teach your  
Children, women, and men  
To live more for peace and love  
To have freedom for education  
To learn to become One  
To help each other  
To build love  
Your beauty of brightness  
Moves positive energy through my body  
To stay strong and happy  
You have been sacrificed a lot  
They changed your green  
Beautiful grasses  
To red-coloured blood  
I feel your pain, your tears  
Your loneliness  
I keep your love safe in my heart  
To nurture it everyday  
With the power of my soul



by Nazira N



**Oh Literacy**

The aura, the presence  
The spice of life that is...  
Reading...writing...eye opener.

**Oh literacy**

Loneliness abounds, the wilderness as wild...  
The unknown...how scary...it's dark...  
The bottom of the ocean, dark, hard to breathe...too many predators  
I am without a sword...



**Oh literacy**...lifts thy spirits.  
Like a hook on fish, hooked,  
No ending experience, not like fish to fisherman...  
Rescue me from deep under; it gets lighter, breathing easier...

**My sword!**

There is light at the end of the tunnel  
Inspiration, there is...much joy  
No more horns and trumpets,  
No more dispatching messengers through wild treacherous jungles for thou  
Can read and communicate with the rest of mankind...

**Oh literacy,**

What a life-changing experience...to masses...a lifetime gift...  
Generations shall benefit  
Unforgettable you are!  
Come! Oh brethren, join in thy chant, over the hills and everywhere!

**Oh literacy!**

by Ted M

## Scribe

Syllables  
Breaking Bone  
I wrote your existence  
In embers  
So ancient  
They would only rize  
Form your ashes  
Stories scribed  
In the heart  
Nucleus  
Of volcanos  
You speak to souls Unearthed  
Free  
I am your code to decipher  
A cipheric revolver  
Spinning weaving  
Words  
Dancing on tongues  
Who won't be silenced  
Carve your essence  
In unyielding oceans  
Lessons you've taught me  
Preserved on strips of birch bark  
Layered in the enigmatic recesses  
Of my mental

Interior pathways  
Of my dome  
Cerebral Wigwam  
I call home  
On Atlantic sands  
Where Mi'kmaq Warriors defend  
My abstract Indagenius  
Like they do a peoples lands  
I know  
So I will never forget  
I will remember  
When I was undeveloped  
Open skies  
No toxins  
When vocalize  
Your teachings out loud  
A people remerges  
From a mist  
Unfurls their secrets  
On the edge  
Of one more  
Tomorrow

By Caroline Mahlikah Awe:ri





Above photo is several learners listening to the Golden Oaks presenters.

Pictured (left-right): Hebresb, Esha, Yasmin, & Ted

Photo Credit: Caroline Outten

## Our Experience at the 2014 Metro Toronto Literacy Movement

The following pieces were written the day after the conference.



Hi my name is Tammi. I went to the learning conference for the first time and I attended two workshops. The first one was about digital tech and the second one was on public health. I enjoyed both of them. I also enjoyed the award ceremony. The highlight of my day was when I won the big prize. I got a Samsung tablet, water bottle, t-shirt, school supplies, traveling mug, traveling umbrella.

My name is Wayne. I went to the Learners Conference yesterday. I met a lot of people and I had fun. All of my teachers were there also the student read the authors' books.

Good Morning, I am Arjoo. Yesterday I introduced the Golden Oak Book Award Nominee Jennifer Lanthier, author of The Stamp Collector. It is a very good book that shows that human stories are central to every life and that words are powerful. I was enjoyed dental care and poetry writing workshops.

Yesterday I attended the Learners Conference. I went to a workshop with Community Literacy Ontario who taught me about newspapers. I then went to a community reporting workshop. I learned about online reporting using tablets and computers. Next year I hope to learn more about the conference.  
~ Efrata



Yesterday, I attended two workshops (protect yourself in a digital world and Newspaper and Media) at the Learners Conference at the North York Central Library.

I presented a review for a book called Guilty. It was challenging for me to present on the stage in front of 300 audiences. I relaxed myself and I reminded myself, "I am the representative of my country". I calmly read my piece and it felt natural speaking in front of the large audience. In the end I throw a freebie for the audience.

~ Nazira

### My experience at the learner's conference

I went to the Learner's Conference workshops yesterday and it was fun. The presenters came different places and I gathered lots of information like where people can go to get free medical information. Public health organizations give out information about cancer, dental clinic, and other critical illness.

The second one was a dancing workshop. It was good practice and exercise for me. Then I felt very confident and I can do it myself.

~Ratneswary





My experience at the Learner's Conference was wonderful and very interesting I got to introduce Golden Oaks Awards Nominee Rebecca Upjohn to the stage. I enjoyed both my workshops especially the one on how to protect yourself in the digital world with Jeffery. I also won some prizes. I loved the conference and I would do it again.

~ Claudette

My experience at the Learner's Conference was an inspirational one especially the workshop on Community reporting by Miss Jamaica. At 80 years old, she was of sound of mind as any youth in her team that does academic upgrading. Something the young generation can emulate.

~ Ted

On June 5th, I attended the Golden Oak Award ceremony and a workshop called The User's Guide to the Brain. I have learned about how teach our brain settle down and to get into the sweet spot Where it change again. I have also learn that how can have control over my brain and have the ability of doing almost anything. ~ Gizman



My name is Pauleen and I attended the Learners Conference yesterday for the first time. I attended two workshops out of the two I really enjoyed the digital world one. I learned a lot of information on how to protect myself better outside my home and in public. The golden oak awards ceremony was great so many books were nominated.

My experience at the Learners conference was great. I learned a lot about the safely using a computer. For example, we learned to have a password for everything we do like bank accounts and credit card. Passwords must be like this M\*nK3y747. I would love to go again.

~ Justin

The 2014 Learners' Conference was a key part of the success of this year's Academic Upgrading Program. In preparation for the conference, students read several books nominated for the Golden Oak Award. It was amazing to see my students' sudden interest in reading for the first time in their lives. I saw delight on their faces as they reported back what they had read and connected it to our study of international human rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The students attended the conference as well-read and confident learners. They got to take part in fun and informative workshops and a few were lucky enough to introduce nominees of the award. I am very grateful for the opportunity my students were given and that I was able to volunteer at the conference. ~ Carrie, instructor



# Thank You!

## Instructors

Joan S  
Carrie H  
Caroline O  
Zahrah M  
Ryan F

## Volunteers

Roland A  
Michael B  
Jennifer B  
Gideon B  
Kendall C  
Gabriela D  
Janet D  
Justin L  
Tatiana M  
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Jamie R  
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