Reading, Writing, and Running

By Timea Wranek

When I went to my first class in the U.S.A., I was so excited. I had to wait for my husband because we didn’t have a babysitter. He was late, of course. His train was in a traffic jam. I waited for him in front of the door and when I spied him I just started to run. When I was running to the Ninth Street YMCA, I tried to think of what I would say when I arrived: “I’m Timea Wranek, I came from Hungary,” etc. When I entered the classroom, it was empty. I looked at my teacher and I said my professional sentences: “I’m Timea. This is a ESOL class? I think, but I’m not sure.” But the teacher told me: “I think it’s not your class. Your class is on 15th street.” Oh, no! I came from 15th street. I live there. Okay, I’m running. Again, I thought. Finally, I arrived at the 15th street YMCA, and the teacher checked the list of name: “Your name is not here.” All right, it was official. I was lost. Why did this happen? I had confused my teacher on Ninth Street. He thought I was not a beginner because I spoke confidently. He didn’t realize that I knew just five sentences.

About the Writer:

Timea Wranek, is from Hungary, and worked there as a Human Resource consultant. She arrived in NYC in August 2015. Now she lives in Brooklyn with her husband, Istvan, and their sons. She loves reading and going to the theater. She attends the Intermediate ESL class at the NAWC.
Along with the blooming flowers and warmer temperatures the NAWC welcome center sprang into our Spring Cycle with eager anticipation.

In the first week of the cycle we hosted our annual Spring Event. Families gathered to share food, fun and fond memories of the past winter. Several of our NAWC participants volunteered at the NAWC’s table for Healthy Kids Day event at the Park Slope Armory YMCA.

The PPY NAWC participated in various community events including: Brooklyn Pride, Fabulous Fifth, Summer Strolls, and a Resource Fair.

In June, the New Americans Initiative organized the Reading Celebration, where two of our participants, Yuliia and Katarzyna, shared their stories of immigrating to the US. The highlights for most NAWC participants were the two trips we took. In Spring, the NAWC took 125 students, including family and friends, to the Statue of Liberty Ellis Island. This was one of the largest trips we have taken, and it was a raving success. Everyone had a great time, and some students even made plans to return.

The second trip was to the Tenement Museum, in the Lower Eastside of Manhattan, where students learned about the issues immigrants faced historically in the NYC. Interestingly, a lot of the participants learned that they still share a lot of these issues today.

We had very successful Spring and Summer 2017 Cycles. We look forward to continuing the good work, helping others to achieve a better tomorrow for themselves and their families.
My Sisters and I

By: Nurunnaher Sheepa

My favorite place is the Coney Island beach because I like watching the water, the waves, and the birds flying and making noise. They sound like music to my ears. I like it when I get in the water with my sisters, and playing around with them. I like going on roller coaster rides with my sisters. I like when my little sister screams because she is always scared of the roller coaster.

About the Writer:
Nurunnaher Sheepa is a 23-year-old student from Bangladesh. Her first language is Bengali. She emigrated from Bangladesh to New York City with her family nine years ago. She graduated from John Jay High School and is currently enrolled in the Intermediate ESL class with instructor Farhana Islam.

What Kind of Child Were You?

By: Natallia Rzanikava

I lived with my grandmother and my grandfather until I was six-years-old. I was always a very quiet and shy girl. I did not like to be in the company of a large number of adults and children. I liked to help my grandmother cook and clean the house. With my grandfather, I worked in the garden, and I fed the chickens, dog, and cat.

I went to school at six-years-old, and my parents took me there. In school, I had a lot of new friends my age, and my life changed. I changed, too. It was fine.

At school, I was engaged by sports and music. I liked to invite friends to my home and go to visit them. I started a completely different life and I enjoyed it very much.

About the Writer:
Natallia Rzanikava, who is 57 years old, came to New York City in October 2010 from Belarus. She now lives with her husband, Valery Rzanikav, in Brooklyn. She likes to study and read books. Both Natallia and her husband were enrolled in the Intermediate ESL class this past Spring. They enjoyed the class tremendously.

Roger Correa... 

Q & A:

How do you feel about the Citizenship Prep Class?
It has helped me develop a better understanding of what it means to become a citizen. The class pays close attention to everything that is involved in the citizenship process.

How do you feel about the instructor?
Luis is very dedicated, and you can tell that he really enjoys being there and helping. He really knows what he is teaching.

How do you feel about the NAWC program in general?
It's a great program that motivates you to continue studying. With all the events and trips, it makes everyone feel like we're a part of a larger group, a family.

How do you feel about the work done by the YMCA?
The YMCA is great because it gives people so many varied and diverse opportunities to make a better life for themselves and their families. The YMCA is a part of the community and the lives of the people they serve.

NAWC participants and PY Staff at the 2017 Reading Celebration.
Students Share their Stories:

This is Mhamed in New York
By Mhamed Sbaiti

When I came to New York I didn’t have any friends or family. I had to stay in a hotel for about a month. Then, I met someone from my country that I had not seen for more than twenty years. He helped me with money, let me stay in his apartment, and gave me food. I found a job after six months and I said to him, “thank you, for helping me.”

About the Writer:
Mhamed Sbaiti, age 66, arrived in the United States from Morocco 16 years ago. His primary languages are Arabic and French. Mhamed is grateful to the instructors and administrative staff at the Prospect Park YMCA NAWC, where he has been a long-time participant.

Remember
By Andres Cortes

I’m going to tell you a little bit about my childhood, the way I remember it. My history begins when I am about five-years-old. I remember myself as a happy boy, active and well-rounded. In school I was not too smart, but not too poor a student. I declared myself to be in the middle. I remember everything I tried to do, or make I did as fast as I could. Nowadays, I think life is totally different. When you are a child you never have to be worried about anything. The only thing for you is to play, eat, study, and sleep. I wish and hope that I can make something more interesting in the future. Thank you for reading my history.

About the Writer:
Andres lives in Brooklyn. His native country is Mexico. His first language is Spanish; he arrived in United States 11 years ago. Andres dreams of having his own business someday and is working hard to realize his dream.