

Escape to America

By Phyan Racom as told to her Teacher

My name is Phyan Racom. I was born in the small mountain village of Pleiku in Vietnam. My people are Montagnard. My family has four brothers and one sister. My mother died when I was 10 years old. When I was 16 years old I married Wil K'sor.



We were married for 15 years, when Wil wanted to leave Vietnam and go to America. The only way to escape was walking the long way around Vietnam to Cambodia which would take 10 to 12 days.

On October 3, 2001, Wil left Vietnam to go to United Nations Refugee Camp in Cambodia. He would not let me go with him because he said I did not know how to swim and it would be too dangerous for me to travel. Buddhist soldiers were watching for people trying to escape to Refugee Camp. The soldiers could capture you and kill you or send you to

jail or maybe harm your body.

I was sad and lonely after my husband left. My father saw me and asked me why I was crying. I told him I was sad and wanted to go find Wil. My father did not want me to go because it was very dangerous. I told him I prayed and God wanted me to go find Wil.

Four months later on February 6, 2002, my Uncle, two cousins and me left our home to go to Refugee Camp in Cambodia. We took the short way to Cambodia. We walked two days and two nights and we rode a camel to escape to the United Nations Refugee Camp in Cambodia. We met a man and he took us to Refugee Camp.

There were many people in the Camp waiting to go to America. I looked for Wil, but could not find him. People told us many more groups would be coming during the day to go to America. We saw people in the Camp running to the gate to see who was coming.

Then I saw Wil and he saw me. He had a wood yoke on his shoulders and was carrying two pails of water. I started to cry because I thought he died when I didn't see him in the Camp. He came to me and touched my shoulder and asked me, "Why are you here?" I say, "To meet you, because you came to camp first." Then I say, "I love you and miss you, that's why I came to camp."



We stayed two months in Refugee Camp. Two times a day, the Camp gave us one big bowl of rice and two eggs so share for the five of us. We found lettuce and cooked it down so we could have something to drink.

My Uncle and two cousins left the Camp and went back to Vietnam because they missed their family too much.

In April 2002, we traveled with other refugees by airplane to downtown Cambodia. We stayed in a motel and then a house. In July, we got on an airplane to America. The plane took us to Havelock, NC, where we stayed in a motel for twenty days until we got sponsors and a place to live.

We were finally in America, but I was alone. I could not speak English. I was hungry, thirsty, and homesick. We had no car. Our church Sponsor took me to store for food. Wil got a job and went to work. I stayed home for one year. I was crying and crying thinking how to speak English. In Vietnam, I did not go to any school to learn. I prayed to God to help me to learn and speak English.

In April 2003, I started night school at Craven Community College. For three years, I studied to learn how to read and speak English. I also got my driver's license to drive Wil's truck.

We have lived in New Bern for ten years. We work at the same company. We now have our own home and a new car. My husband got his U. S. Citizenship in December 2012. I am still studying to better understand and speak English. My goal is to get my U. S. citizenship in 2014.



Read All About It!

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Student Stories

SEND IN YOUR STORIES

Write a story or poem for the next newsletter.

Willie Snow's Homemade Spaghetti Sauce

One of my favorite recipes is Homemade Spaghetti Sauce.

Ingredients

- 1 medium onion
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 small can tomato paste
- 1 family pack (2 pounds) hamburger
- 1 8 ounce pack spaghetti



Directions

First take one medium onion and one green bell pepper. Cut up into small fine pieces together. Put into a medium frying pan. Cook for approximately 15 minutes until they turn brown. Add hamburger and cook until it turns brown. Add tomato paste. Cook for 10 minutes. Serve over cooked spaghetti.

Mmmm... It is so good!



Indian Summer—By Tatiana Greene



October has come. This month is the second month in the fall. You can feel different temperature outside already: much cooler in the morning and evening, but afternoon until night is warm yet.

Nature is in the beginning of change. The leaves on the leafy trees change colors and fall down. We have many evergreen trees and bushes, they make us happy through all the year. October has change in the air, too.

The air smells fresher and a little bitter. That smell reminds us that winter comes soon. September was very warm here, and the flowers bloomed on

the trees and bushes. It was amazing!

Now nature is very silent, frozen, and sort of waiting for what will happen next. If you look on the river, it changes in the fall, too. The sky reflects into the water, but paints the water with gray or lead colors. The river's water is cold.

You can sit on the riverside, and enjoy a beautiful view, and the warm sun.

This time is called "Indian Summer".

"Indian Summer"-great fall time!

The Hispanic Tradition of Quinceañera

Written by Rosario Lugo and Lulu Jacome



Rosario's daughter turned 15 in 2006, and Lulu's daughter turned 15 in 2009. Recently their friend Laura's two daughters turned 15 ½ and 14 ½. 15 is a very special birthday for the girl and her family. Here are some highlights from their celebrations:

It is when girls get introduced to the society and become able to dance with boys.

In the church the girls and family give thanks to God for everything that they have. The priest explains to the girl all responsibilities of adulthood.

Before the big day lots of things need to happen. The day for the mass needs to be set. The place for the party needs to be arranged. It has to be decided if the food is catered or prepared by friends and family.

The Quinceañera and her court need special clothing. The boys are called chambelanes and the girls are called damas. Sometimes there are younger girls called recuerderas. Special colors are chosen and the Quinceañera wears a Cinderella ball gown. The chambelanes wear special tuxedos. The damas wear smaller ball gowns. The recuerderas wear very fancy evening dresses. It is all very beautiful.

On the day of the Quinceañera Celebration first there is the mass at the church. The Virgin of Guadalupe is very important in this celebration. Then all drive to the reception. Music is playing and can be a DJ, or Banda, or Mariachis. Sometimes videos or pictures of the girls are shown on a big screen. This shows the girls growing up.

Food and drinks are served to everyone. The party can be long, from 6 hours to all night in Mexico. The first dance is the ball with the father and this introduces the girl to dancing. Then the chambelanes and damas dance a vals, a special dance.

There has to be a special cake and everyone has to make a toast to everybody. This is a very big day. Little girls dream of their Quinceañeras.



The Day of the Dead

Written by Lulu Jacome and Rosario Lugo



In Mexico on November 1 we celebrate the angelitos or children and babies who have died, the little angels. On November 2 we celebrate adults who have died, los muertos. The families start to prepare food ahead of time. They take it and flowers to the cemetery for the celebration. When the whole family gets there we eat and talk about when the child or person was alive, what they liked, what they did, and funny stories. We visit other families in the cemetery. Some people bring music and other people play the music the dead person liked. Stores sell special bread, called bread of the dead and candy. The candy is shaped like skeletons. This is a tradition for generations. It is a happy time. (The items in these pictures are made totally of candy!)



Congratulations to our 5 newest United States citizens:

Ma Ngwe Aye and her tutor Kathy Travis

Priscilla Soe (formerly Lac Po) and her tutor Nancy Galway

Myint Soe and his tutor Debra Strachan

Hmwe Hmwe and Banyar Mon and their tutor Kit Crouch

July 17, 2013

Hello

I am very happy and very thankful for this wonderful bike.

I will use it to go shopping, visit my friends, and to see a great tutor at Craven Literacy Council.

Also, I will use it to go to Union Point park.

Thank you very much
David Heath