

Changing lives through adult literacy is The READ Center's mission. We believe that everyone needs and deserves a literate life.

STUDENT VOICE

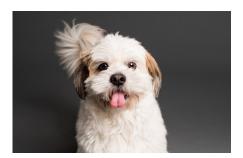
A Publication for and by Students of The READ Center

Spring 2023

My Dog Waffle

By Jasmine

I love to walk my dog Waffle. Outside he loves to bark. He loves to stay under my mom's feet. He loves people. He is 11 years old.





Matt's Story

By Matt Sanders

I like the painting of Maud McLaurine Hurt because she is watching me. She is sitting in a chair and holding a book. Her picture is in the Chester Library. I think she was smart because she read. I think she liked to eat food and shop at K-Mart. I love her picture.

Dreams

By Asheeda Poetry inspired by Langston Hughes' "Dreams" and Jacqueline Woodson's Brown Girl Dreaming

Hold fast to dreams for if dreams die Life is a sigh When you drive pass by.

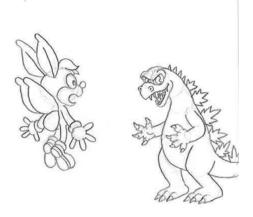
Hold fast to dreams for if dreams go Life is a like a river flow



The Amazing Animal Time Fantasy Story: Moffee Moth meet Godzilla

By: Stephen Solomon

Moffee Moth is visiting Tokyo, Japan. Moffee met a red panda named Redi. Moffee wanted to ask Redi to tell him about kaiju. "What's the kaiju?" Moffee asked. Redi is thinking about kaiju. "Come on, I'll show you," said Redi. He took Moffee to the laboratory to tell all about kaiju. But the locusts had brought the giant egg. Moffee and Redi are in the laboratory. Redi met a beige fox named Beiget, and the tanuki named Brownie. Moffee asked. "Tell me all about kaiju?" Redi thought about kaiju. Kaiju is a giant horrible monster, they lived on a giant mysterious island. But suddenly they were under attack. Oh no! It's Godzilla! Godzilla destroyed the



city. "What are we going to do!" asked Beiget. "Look over there!" said Brownie. Why it's the locusts and they brought the giant egg? Moffee thought Godzilla had lost his egg. "Hey you three!" shouted Moffee. "Give him back his egg!" When Godzilla saw the 3 locusts, they brought his egg. So they flew away, and Moffee gave Godzilla's egg back. So Godzilla returned to his giant mysterious island. Moffee Moth saved Tokyo city.



By Andretta Long Poetry inspired by Langston Hughes' "Dreams" and Jacqueline Woodson's Brown Girl Dreaming

Hold fast to dreams For if dreams die Life is a high of goodbye

Hold fast to dreams For if dreams go Life is a blow of snow.

Spending Time With My Family

By Anthony

I like spending time with my family. Especially my two sisters. When we get together we laugh and talk about everything! We talk about what's going on with the Supreme Court and in the world. I really love spending time with my family!



The Bill Pickett Rodeo

By Will

The best time in my life has been when I went to a Bill Pickett Rodeo. The Rodeo was in Maryland and I was a teenager at the time. The rodeo lasted throughout the whole day and my Mom and Dad were with me. What made this the best time of my life thus far was that the Rodeo had great barbecue soul food and black cowboys!





I Am Reading Better

By Carnelia

Since I have been coming to The READ Center, I keep getting better and better. I am reading better! And that makes me feel real good!

My Time With My Wife

By David I am very happy about my life with my wife. We did everything together. When you saw one you saw the other. Nothing compares to our happiness!



By Lavado I went to St. John's Church in Church Hill. I went to see the actors. I took the bus and I used Google Maps. And I got there on time. I took pictures.



By Mark Taylor

My younger sister is Bethsherie; I love her with all my heart! She is kind and good to everyone, especially me. I felt very lonely and extremely sad when she moved far away. She moved north to the U.S. capitol, Washington, D.C. After that, she took a trip to Africa!



Horse

By B.L.A.

I saw a picture of a horse. The name of the. painting is Prisoner of Mine. Thomas Larose is the artist. It is a pretty picture. You can see it at The Perkinson Center for the Arts and Education.



Special Dinner

I went to a restaurant in Richmond named Jackie's. It was very good, tasty, country food. The pork chop was tender and juicy. I had yams that tasted of cinnamon and brown sugar. I enjoyed a creamy macaroni and cheese dish. I love coconut pie so I ordered a slice. It was good. It was one of the best dinners I've ever had.

By Lillie Booker

I got an award for reading a book about the president. It was about how he runs the White House. It explained how he helps people. He speaks to people to ask them about their needs. He needs to know how much money is needed.





By Inaam

The weather is confusing. The trees are blooming, but it is the middle of winter, this is not a blessing to the earth.

By Taeja

My niece is named Kamera. She is one year old. We know when she is bad. She is cute! I was on the phone with her. I asked her if she was being bad. She said yes. She loves to go outside. She rides a car outside. She knows how to say "I love you." We call her Granny because she acts like an old lady. She calls my little sister Bobut. She plays with her.





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Retirement Is Not What I Expected

By Dempsey

I retired on July 31. I think I need to go back to work because things are getting too expensive for me. If I try to return to work, the biggest problem that I would have is my education because most companies do not want to hire someone who does not have a high school diploma or a GED. For that reason, I do not know what to do.

Oh, I think I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to stay off for a year and then, if I need to go back to work, I will go to the company and ask for the manager. I will tell him or her my problem and see if they would hire someone without those credentials.





My Birthday

By Isha Batra

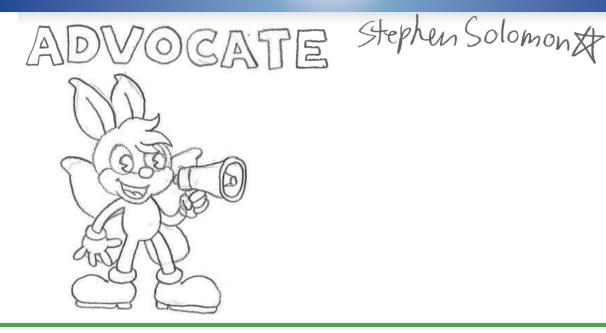
I, Isha, have a December birthday. I would like to have a surprise party and get money. I would use the money for clothes and shoes. I would also like to have cheese and pepperoni pizzas at the party. Then I would like to have my cake with blue icing, and also have banana splits and ice-cream for dessert. I think it would be fun to dance around and do musical chairs with my friends. Then I would say good bye to my friends and be happy for them coming to my party. I will see them again next time.

My name is Johnny Johnson

By Johnny Johnson

I like to tell you a story about my first cruise. When I was a little boy I like to watch the T.V. show Love Boat. I would dream I was on the ship having all kind of fun. So I told my wife that on our 3 year anniversary I want to take her on a Honeymoon anniversary cruise. Thank to God this year God let my dream and word to my wife come true. January 7-12 I took my first cruise. Thank you God p.s. Can't wait for the next one





To be an advocate and what it means to me.

By Edoesia

An advocate is someone who is aware that a need for help is needed in a place or in someone's life. An advocate to me can be anyone, for example: a parent, a community leader, a family member or a good Samaritan. In other words, an advocate is simply just a person who speaks up for correction in a situation or for someone that needs help. Now some of the things I have seen an advocate doing are the following: sharing information, bringing enlightenment to a person or a situation and putting into place extra help where it is needed. Now when I look at the definition of advocate it reads "A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy. I think my definition is better. Now to find an advocate you can look in your community, school, college, church, home and other places.

Next what stands out to me with the word advocate is support. The power that an advocate has is the courage to speak up. To be a self advocate, it requires courage, and self-awareness. Self-awareness is life changing, because you have accepted the true reality of where you are in life. You conclude you want change. Now for me this is my reality. I want things in my life to change for the better, and I know I need help and support to achieve my goals. **Continued on the next page ->**

This is where honesty, courage and being vulnerable come in. Because so many people are afraid of being vulnerable, there's a chance of rejection, to be made fun of, embarrassment, and the list goes on, but there's a time when you get tired of being treated wrongly, so you must be your own self-advocate and get the support you need, especially if you have a disability that is not so visible. For instance, having dyslexia, you can communicate very well, and you seem normal. However, when it comes to reading and spelling your barriers show their heads, and that is very challenging and embarrassing. Now this is where your true strength needs to come in. Now advocating for yourself you will need to find information and resources to start your new journey in life to overcome your barriers.

To advocate for The Read Center to me is a very important position to be in because this organization provides support for many people with adult literacy issues and for people with dyslexia. I had a personal advocate working with me. Her name is Tawanda Jones. She led me to the read center to get help with my disability. Then the Read Center met with me, and provided me with a tutor. His name is Stanley. The support that I receive from Stanley is so amazing. He helps me with my dyslexia teaching course that I got from Chirstine Blance. She is a dyslexia teacher in England. Now my tutor and I work together weekly. At times it's difficult for me to understand some of my work. He always encourages me and gives me positive words of affirmation to keep going on, and I'm able to overcome my struggles and understand my work better. To have good support in your life really makes a positive change and I am a witness to that.

My tutor is now helping me to prepare for college, so I can achieve one of my goals in life by attending college and graduating successfully. Without good support I would not be on the path I am on now in life. Support is a seven-letter word, but the power that comes with this little seven letter word is unbelievable. This seven-letter word opens doors that are like titanium steel doors. This seven-letter word breaks down barriers. This seven-letter word puts confidence in you when you feel like you have none. This seven-letter word helps you to keep persevering forward. This seven-letter word helps you to accomplish your goals, and most important to change the way you think and your life. This seven-letter word support is powerful, life changing and it's having the ability to break generational ignorance thinking, wrong lifestyles, wrong values, and wrong morals. Support is very important to me, and I am grateful to have the support from all my supporters/ advocates in my life.

Advocacy

By Marie G.

To me, advocating for adult literacy is number one in my life. Education is freedom. Education is independence. It's also having self esteem and a sense of self worth.

Literacy is the key to a better life just as prayer is the key to a Christian life.

For example, if you have to go to the hospital not knowing how to read and write, it is humiliating having to ask someone to help fill out your form. If I got a personal letter, I would have to ask for someone to read it, and then it's not private anymore.

As to my life's ambitions and dreams, it's difficult to navigate through it all. Before I started at the READ Center, I had no clue as to anything pertaining to a book. Now I know what it means to read a book.

Looking at my life now, it's much easier to do so many things that I couldn't do before. It's amazing how my life is going now!!

The READ Center organization is changing lives!! We thank you so much!!

Advocacy

By Adrian

Why Advocate for adult literacy? For people who can not read, it helps them to know they are not alone. Nonreaders will more likely seek help if they know other people have difficulty reading too. Learning to read gives the new reader a sense of freedom.

Advocacy also lets the community know the need for teachers and tutors. Advocacy will help community members learn how to assist. I think with this combination, we can solve the literacy problem. Without shedding light on adult literacy, this challenge will remain and will leave many feeling alone.

Advocacy

By Lauren

To be an advocate means to help and support the READ Center. It teaches people to write more and read better. I come because I like the READ Center. It's fun. I enjoy the work. My writing, spelling and reading skills are better. I would like to tell others about READ.

Advocacy By Janine B

The READ Center is an adult education program for adults that can't read and people that want to read better.

There are people that donate their time to teach adults that can't read. This program has one on one tutors and classes. They are very patient and understanding. They have helped me out so much. I was a woman that was embarrassed and ashamed until I met the READ Center a few years back.

The students help each other out. We make each other feel like we do matter and not to give up.

I just want to thank Carolyn Harsh and her team.

They are the best and the woman who started this program, Jean Profitt, and those who donate to this program to keep it running.

I know there are some people out there that are tired of people doing things for them because they can't read. When you can't read you end up with people in your business. Who wants that? This program can help you get your life back.

By Timothy Walker

I have accomplished reading my mail by myself. I am doing better now at work because my reading is smooth now. I have more ways to go. So many people need to accomplish their reading. I amaze my-self sometimes when I am reading because I do not realize I am.

By C.W.

When I came to the Read Center I became a much better student because I have more focus. I am very good at math. I am really good at directions. I am reading better.I am good at the computer. By A READ Center Student This year I learned to read better! My dedicated tutors worked very hard with me in class. I made amazing progress. This makes me feel so good. Reading is extremely important!

Advocating for Literacy

By Lavonda R.

What is a literacy advocate? A literacy advocate supports or speaks out for someone else's educational needs or rights in reading, writing and language. My name is Lavonda. I advocate for literacy for my 7 year old daughter who I'm helping learn to read as well as for myself who also struggles with reading and writing. This is important to me. Literacy allows us to make sense of written, visual, and spoken things, including books, newspapers, maps, your bills, job contracts and computers. Reading allows us to follow conversations and instructions.

Here are some steps I took to advocate for myself and my daughter. First thing I did was stop being afraid to tell someone that I struggle with reading. Second thing I did was realizing what I needed to read and being able to understand it, like dispatch sheets, daughter's homework, and other assignments and job opportunities. Third thing I did was knowing where to get help, which for me meant I Googled and found the READ Center.

My first tutoring session was October 18th 2022 and now it's February 2023. I'm more confident in reading and able to understand what it is I'm reading including my work contract. I also had zero computer skills when I started. My tutor Lauri who advocates for me has taught me computer skills, reading aloud, and so much more.

Literacy is power!! Reading helps you learn and succeed and it's a skill we need in everyday life.

Advocacy

By Dewin T.

To be an advocate is to tell people about the good things about the READ Center. It is important for people to advocate for adult literacy so that people do the things for themselves. When I came to United States, I could not read. As a refugee, it took a long time to go to class because I had no money for gas. I work many hours, and have four children to take care of. One day, deep down in my heart, I said that I will go back to school. I wanted to be a citizen of the United States. I took READ classes. I got my citizenship. I'm still going to classes. I want to tell people to take READ classes and help themselves. THANK you READ Center!

Advocacy

By Brenda S.

An advocate is a person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause. It is very important to advocate for adult literacy because there are a lot of people who can't read or write very well.

It would help me because people could understand that if you ask for help filling out paperwork, it's not because you don't want to fill it out. You just can't read it to fill it out. I advocate for myself because I know it's hard if you can't read because people might take advantage of other people. I have a lot of support from my family.

I talk to people and tell them how they can get help to learn to read and write at the READ Center.

Advocacy

by H.Taylor

My reason for joining the READ Center is that I want to be more independent with my life. When someone is illiterate, they are missing out on a lot in their lives. When a person can pick up a book and read it from cover to cover and pronounce every word correctly, they can learn a great deal. That is my goal one day. Before I joined the READ Center, my reading skills were very poor. Now I can do my reading on my own. Thanks to the READ Center and the teacher and tutors also. I think I can speak for my classmates as well. We really do appreciate all the help you guys are giving us. Thank you all so very much.

Advocacy

By Ebony E

It is important for me to learn to read. Reading will help me become more independent. There are things I want to be able to do.

I want my own car. I have to pass a written driving test. I also want my own apartment someday.

Reading will help me to move forward.

Returning to the READ Center

By Charles B.

In the past, I attended READ Center classes at the Chesterfield Tech Center. I went there for 3 ½ years. When COVID started, I stopped attending.

Now, I felt that I needed to go back to classes. I wanted to continue to advance my reading.

In 2022, I went back to the CTC. They told me they were no longer having classes there.

Then, I called the READ Center's main office. I found the phone number on an old READ Center bag. It is 804-288-9930.

The office set up an appointment for me to be tested. At first, I went to the old office. I felt like I was on a wild goose chase. Then I called and got the new location.

Then they retested me and told me to go to classes at the Chester Library!

Why I Came Back to the READ Center

By Rayveyon A. Rogers

I want to get my GED and my driver's license. I want to write better including better grammar, punctuation and comprehension when reading. Computer classes will help me learn to use email and fill out my driver's license application. I can achieve these goals if I work hard enough.

Follow Your Goals!

By Fatimo Ibrahim

When Mr. Joe and Ms. Watkins told me about the READ Center I was excited that I could improve my reading and writing. I have a dream of having a day care center at my house. I want to be able to help my grandkids and their friends with their homework. I also want to be able to write a letter to my family and read my private information on my own. The READ Center was a good opportunity for me to reach my goal. I'm really grateful to meet Miss Leslie and the other tutors. They are really faithful to us. They try their best to help us so we can reach our goals. My children are proud of me for going to The READ Center. My reading has gotten a lot better. I'm not going to give up!

The READ Center

By George

The READ Center is a good place for me to learn how to read better. I am able to read to my grandson. I want to be able to get my GED and CDL license to get a better job. I meet a lot of people. They need help too. So they need to have more READ Centers.

Learning to Read

By T. Harris

I have decided to come to the READ Center to get some help. My first priority is to be able to read my mail. My second goal is to learn new words each week. I find using flashcards is very helpful. I like to solve crossword puzzles. I still struggle with putting words together, but I am not going to stop trying.

Jessica is Coming Up

By J.S.

I learned when I was in middle school that I had difficulty reading. My ability to read was made worse by a lack of confidence. When I graduated my counsellor suggested that I contact The READ Center for help with my reading. It was one of the best pieces of advice that I ever got. Shortly after I started at the Center my confidence started to improve. I have been at the Center for several years. My teacher and tutors have been outstanding. I expect to make the best of every day I am at the Center. I believe I would be lost without all that I have gotten from The READ Center.

When I Came to The READ Center

By Dequane Monroe

When I came to The READ Center I wanted to get my driver's license. I was motivated to come to class to focus on my reading skills and my writing. I would follow directions from my teachers and pay attention in class. I did this to reach my goal to go to college.

In class I would read faster and easier. When I came to The READ Center I studied hard and reach my goals. I love learning in class you have to be good listener. I got my driver's license and reached my goal and continue to work on my other goals. I want a better future in my life. That is why I came to The READ Center.

My Little Dog

By A C B

I was at work and my little dog was left alone at home and one day he got out. My neighbor picked him up in his car and went to Mc-Donald's, and they both had hamburgers. From that time the dog became his friend, but my neighbor was as lonely as the dog. So he and the dog drove around the neighborhood, and they both enjoyed the company so much. One day I was coming home from work and I saw the dog in the street dead. I said to myself, "That is my little dog." So I went to the neighbor and told him what had happened, and we were sad, but we knew the dog had a happy life.





Going Fishing

By A Read Center Student Fishing used to be fun. Now you need to know what is in season, how many you can keep and the size of the fish. If you don't follow the rules and the game warden catches you, you will get a ticket. After you pay the ticket, the fishing trip will cost you more than the fish is worth. Have a nice fishing trip.

Lakers

By Jammar

LeBron James plays for the Lakers. He used to play for the Miami Heat. The Lakers played Boston. LeBron helped the Lakers beat the Celtics. After the game, the Lakers team went to the movies to have some fun. The movie was funny. Then they went home because they were tired.





Bowling With My Family

By Sam P.

I was bowling with my family. I threw the ball down the lane. I got a strike. "Sam is going to win now", everyone hollered. Then I went home.

Church Hill Food Tour

By Bouson KM

For my birthday my wife and I went on the Church Hill Food Tour. It was a two hour walking tour where we learned about Church Hill history and visited five restaurants and sampled food. We ate at an Ethiopian Restaurant, visited a Pie Shop and a Wine store, one other restaurant and finished at a James Beard Pastry Shop where they bake in a 100 year old oven. We learned about the underground railroad, history of the ironworks around the community and walked the brick and cobblestone streets. We had a good time. It was a great way to learn more about Richmond's history.





Christmas With Tina's Family

By Debbie

I want to write about Tina, her son and his girlfriend. They are very nice and I love everyone. Tina's son and girlfriend came for a late Christmas. We had hot dogs, cheeseburgers, and Pizza. Her son and girlfriend gave me some gifts. Brody and I had fun together. I gave Brody a football for Christmas. Candance and Derick gave me some nice gifts. I really had a lot of fun. I like Candance and Derick. They are a lot of fun. I hope that they get to come back for my birthday. I am planning on having ice cream and a birthday cake. I really enjoyed the visit with Candance and Derick and Brody.

Problems

By S.R.

Everyone has problems. If you have a problem, you can talk with your best friend or a psychologist.

I will give you the steps to solve your problems.

First, recognize where you are now and clearly see where you need to go to achieve the right balance of inside and outside. Second, by acting in harmony with your soul, desire but not just the desire of your mind, heart, or senses. After I give my steps, my opinion is go to God, talk, pray, and cry. After that, look at what you feel and you will get a solution.

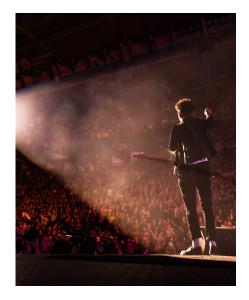
After many steps, I gave you what is best to do. Will you use it?



Young Dylan

By Aiyon

Young Dylan is a young rapper. He's very talented. He also has his own TV show as well. I followed him on Instagram. I saw he met his younger fans. I watch his TV show called, "Tyler Perry's Young Dylan", it's full of drama and he makes me laugh. He tells his aunt and uncle about the street language where he lived and they try to understand him to raise another child. In the end he is still their nephew. Young Dylan and I have some things in common. My family lived in an apartment for a long time. My mother wants to live in a house so until then we live with my grandparents. Me, my sister and brother, just like one big happy family. I would like to be a performer just like Young Dylan. Can't rap but I do sing - that's all I have to say.





My Favorite Cat By Bernard

My grandma had a white cat and I always fed him. I always asked for him when I went to see her. I brought him some milk. Then, I talked to my grandmother about getting another cat. I think I will name her Sheba and they will have kittens. Then, we will have a house full of cats. I think I will get a cat house.

MY NEW HOUSE

By Angel P.

It is on one floor, and I like that it doesn't have stairs. I can decorate my home with my son. My home is a different color in the bedroom. It will be closer to the bus stop for Dominique to go to school. It has a clean playground. I can't wait to move into my home!



My JUICING Life

BY Janae

...Is very hard but very good for you. As for me, I juice every three weeks. It takes so long and a lot of patience. First you have to have all of the ingredients for the juices. Then you have to shop for them. Me personally, I like to go to 3 different stores to choose the best fruit and vegetables. After, I go home to start the process of cleaning my fruit and vegetables. I put everything in the sink and begin to spray it with veggie cleaner. When that is done, I begin to cut the veggies into small pieces. Then I put them in the blender. Then I begin to pour it in little containers, and then I freeze half of it and put the rest in the refrigerator for 7 days.



My Amazing Mom

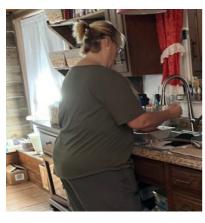
By Cody

Sweet....Kind....Generous....Sincere But now I have found another person that is important in my life. My Aunt Jessica has taken me in and cares for my life. Every day she becomes more like a mother to me.

Though she is not my mother, Jessica treats me like one of her own.

She has gone above and beyond to make me feel welcome in my new home and has helped me every step of the way. I wish she knew how much she means to me and how

thankful I am for her love and support.



"A Miracle"

By F.W.

Damar Hamlin was born March 24,1998. Damar has played football for the Buffalo Bills for two years. At the age of 24, he suffered Cardiac Arrest after making a tackle. He was transferred to a Buffalo hospital and nine days later discharged. The game was actually stopped and not finished. This is something that has never happened in football history. Both teams came together and prayed for Damar Hamlin. God is able and ready to show us His love and His power to help us in everything that we go through.



The Escape Room

By Destiny S

This is the escape room: they were in jail. They found a key they had to throw dirty socks from the toilet in the bin. Then they got a key to unlock the cell. They went into another room and found something that looked like a tic-tac-toe board. Then they had to crawl through a dark room into a library. They found three books then they found another key. They unlocked the door. They were stuck. They had to ask for a clue to help them so they looked for a clue. It said to open the safe to find the money to get out. When they opened the safe their money was not there but they got out with fake money and won the game.





Christmas Eve BY Laquinda

Last year on Christmas Eve we had a blast. Everybody came to the house and ate good food that my mom had made. Then it was nice seeing all my babies open up all their presents. I got some socks from my aunt Kim. I also got body wash from my Grandma. Then when everyone got done my mom said, "I have an announcement to make! I have a present for Laquinda!" I sat down and started to smile really hard and then I opened it up. It was a Ps5! I jumped up and down. I was so excited. That Christmas Eve was amazing!

Cheese

By Brenda

I love cheese. I love American cheese on my cheeseburger. Macaroni and cheese is so good that sometimes I cannot stop eating it. Cheese is good for your calcium and to help your bones, teeth, and blood pressure. There are all kinds of cheese but I do not know all the names.



January

By Sis D.

January used to be my favorite month. If you want to hear, pull up a chair and lend me your ears if you want to know. Ok I used to love January because my aunt, my uncle, my sister, my brother, my nephew, my niece, and my grandbaby were all born on January 22nd. Until October. I am in love with October. My brother-in-law was born October 1st. My best friend was born on the 2nd. My grandson was on the 3rd, and I was born on the 4th. My sister's best friend was on the 5th, and my granddaughter was on the 6th. The 7th is my niece, and the 8th is my other niece, and the 9th is my nephew. The 10th is my sister-in-law, and the 11th is my nephews, the twins. The 12th is my niece, and my nephew is the 13th, and his mom is the 14th. My grandson is the 15th, and my nephew is on the 16th, and my other nephew is the 17th. It is my niece on the 18th, and my nephew is the19th, and no one until my grandbaby on the 23rd. My next door neighbor is the 31st. And that's all folks. That's how I became in love with October.





I Got Special Call on Life to Do

By Lance

Lance F Smith does ministry on Saturday. I feed the Homeless people and talk to them. People help them with anything. We pass out clothing and shoes and hats and coats and gloves and bikes. I talk to them and pray for them. I make new friends. It is around Food Lion on the Northside of Richmond. I meet different church people from different churches. Each week the people are thankful for the things we give them. I feel blessed to help them.

Changing lives through adult literacy is The READ Center's mission. We believe that everyone needs and deserves a literate life.



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