



The Worldwide Olympian

Volume 1, Issue 1—Celebrating our wonderful ESOL students at Mesa college! Fall 2017

SAN DIEGO
MESA COLLEGE

In Memory of His Father: Books to Liberia

Donations for Education. One of our former ESOL students, Robert Saah is involved with a project to send educational materials such as books, computers, reading lights, and other school supplies to Liberia. With help from other organizations, he has collected over 39,000 books to send back to Liberia and has filled an entire shipping container with those books! Volunteers helped to pack up over 880 boxes of books and due to a large number of donations, they will actually need another shipping container! He is still looking for donations to help fund the project and volunteers to help with the packing and loading of the container.

Please visit <https://www.gofundme.com/school-supplies-for-liberia> to donate today!

VAMP Winner. Robert is also a former Visual/ Audio Monologue Performance (“VAMP”) VAMP winner. See page 2 for an excerpt from his empowering story about his journey to America.



New ESOL Chair Donna Duchow!

Professor Donna Duchow is our ESOL chair. Professor Duchow has been teaching at Mesa since 2000 and has taught ESOL for almost twenty-five years. She also teaches English and French. Professor Duchow loves working at Mesa and loves her students! Please feel free to stop by her office in **G316** if you need help or want to say “hello.”

If you want to send her an email, her email address is:

dduchow@sdccd.edu.



A Journey Into the Bushes, by Robert Saah

On June 10, 2001

the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees spokesman came to the border and proclaimed that the government of Sierra Leone was pleased to allow all the newcomers into their country. During our stay in Bo District, things grew harder for everyone. People starved, there was no medication for sick people, and depression existed everywhere. We moved around to several camps during our stay. After two months, there was no good news from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees People. Refugees became sick with a disease called Lassa fever; people died every day.

I remember a Monday afternoon when my mother came down with Lassa fever, and she was taken to Bo District Hospital for treatment. My family had to stay in the camp, and I was not allowed to go with my mother. This saddened me. My mother was our only hope. My little sister and I depended on my mother,

but all we could do was pray to God to save our mother.

On August 12, 2002 our prayers were answered. My mother was discharged from the hospital and was taken back to the camp.

In 2003, the war ended in my country. Many people returned back home, but some refused to go back to Liberia because of what happened to their families. Spokesman Daniel Samuel asked us, "Why don't you go back to your country?" My mother replied to him, "Because of what happened to our loved ones and the lives that we lost." Mr. Samuel told us he'd investigate our claims and my father's death.

In 2008, my family and I finally received some good news. We were going to the United States of America. I was so overjoyed because now I had a chance for a new life.

When we came to the US, I wanted to complete my father's dream and go to school. I enrolled at Diego

Hills School, and I was asked to complete 140 credits to get my high school diploma. Give all I had faced I was more than happy to do so. On September 5, 2012 I completed all my 140 credits. I stand before you today student at Mesa College.

My father loved his children, and he made sure that all his kids went to school. He used to repeat proverb that education was the key to success, and he encouraged us to take education seriously. My father often said this quote from Benjamin Franklin: "Education is something you receive when your father sends you to college. But it isn't complete until you send your son there." Today I live through my father's dreams and words.

Finally, I want to leave you with encouraging words. In everything in life, do not lose hope. Keep faith and stay strong. Keep pushing until the end of any struggle you face. Have faith that a better future lies ahead.

ESOL 45 Student Wins Spring 2017 VAMP Award

During the Spring 2017 semester, Mesa College's English department held a VAMP showcase that featured a collection of stories from students who wrote about "a story that takes place in or shows where you are from." We are so proud that one of our ESOL students' entries was chosen! Grace Tuzolana, who was enrolled in ESOL 45 in Spring 2017, worked with writing professors and performance coaches to craft her story and performance about her experiences relocating from her native country of Tanzania. We know that all of our ESOL students have amazing stories to share, so if you are interested in learning more about VAMP and other live performance showcases, you can go to the website www.sosayweallonline.com to get more information.

Keep reading for a brief interview with Grace and ESOL Professor Tracey Walker.

How did you feel when you found out you were chosen?

"I was surprised and didn't want to tell anyone – not even your family."

She didn't even tell her teacher. At first, she thought it wasn't a big deal. Then she started to realize it was when she saw that it wasn't just ESOL

students, and then there was this large audience when she got there.

What was the most valuable part to you?

"Sharing my story"

Why? What about you story did you want others to understand?

"...to let them know how I feel and what I went through in life and to just share and show how I'm here, but even here, there are memories of where I come from."

More on her message from the interview...

"Everyone is from different places, different countries in the world, but sometimes we find ourselves where we are. Sometimes it's very hard to be in this country...but remember that you can do it. No matter what situation you're facing, just make it your own. Home is wherever you are."

How she felt during the VAMP performance:

"Nervous...shaking..."

"I was nervous. I was shaking. Oh my gosh!"

It was the biggest crowd she's ever performed in front of.

"My sister went live on

FB....it started a conversation with people from home...Tanzanians... they said I should write a book."

What did you say?

"I will write a book someday."

What is your major?

"International studies." *She wants to work with immigrants and refugees. When she got here, there was an organization that gave her food.*

When she was in a refugee camp, she told herself: "If I get to the United States, I will help people like they help me."

Experience in ESOL 45 and relationship to goals....

"Being in the class has given us opportunities."

Please turn to page 5 for an excerpt from her VAMP piece, "Grace is a Thing that Stays the Same."



Vamp Winner Grace Tuzolana tells her story to the audience.

ESOL Graduate Tutors are Here to Help You!

Did you know that we have Graduate Students from the University of San Diego and the University of California Santa Cruz working in our ESOL classes? I am pleased to introduce our Fall 2017 ESOL Graduate Tutors, Dailyn and Nina. They are assisting students in ESOL 45, and they are also holding office hours in the Writing Center (WC) in the Learning Resource Center (LRC). Keep reading for more fun facts!

Nina Rostworowski

is working with Professor Jorge Villalobos in our evening ESOL 45 class. She is currently a PhD student in the education department at University of California, Santa Cruz. Come visit her in the WC on Thursday afternoons from 11am to 1pm! Nina says that she loves working with students because, “ESOL students are the best! They bring a lot of disposition to the

classroom and really embrace the learning opportunities that are offered to them. Being a speaker of English as an additional language myself, I have a special connection with ESOL students, their cultures, native languages, and all the valuable knowledge and experience that they share! I am a very happy ESOL tutor at Mesa! In her free time, she loves to whip up new delicious meals in the kitchen, relaxing at the beach, or playing tennis! Stop by and say hello!

Dailyn Brown is working with Professor Christie Allred in our morning ESOL 45 class. She is currently a MA TESOL student at the University of San Diego. She is holding her office hours in the WC on Wednesday afternoons from 11:30am to 12:30pm. When I asked her about her experience working with ESOL students, Dailyn said, “I have been working with

ESOL students for over 10 years! I love that I still learn new things every day about other countries and cultures. I enjoy incorporating film and music into my lessons because they are passions of mine that I want to share with my students! Some people are surprised to know that I live in an urban part of San Diego, but I have a large garden, and I even have chickens!

Come by the WC on Wednesdays and schedule a tutoring session with Dailyn or just pop in and say hello!



Grace is a Thing that Stays the Same, by Grace Tuzolana

In 2008 something amazing happened, we were approved for resettlement to come to The United State of America. When I heard the news, I was so very happy. In 2010 my family arrived in San Diego to pursue a better life and opportunities. Not long after, on my way to Iowa visiting and old friend, who I had not seen in 5 years, I looked outside the window of the bus. This memory hit me so hard and I was transported to a place far away in my memory and felt as if I was back in Africa travelling to the refugee camp.

It was an experience mixed with sadness, happiness, and something else hard to describe. I had traveled back in time. Seeing that wide open land with farm, mountains, cows, rivers and blue sky in the day and the dark sky with stars that spread as far as I could see at night, brought some tears to my eyes. I tried to keep calm, as I didn't want to attract the other passengers' attention. Most were busy chatting on their phones and others sleeping. I wish they could understand how much they were missing out, I thought, as I focused my eyes out of the bus windows.

Waiting at the bus was my friend Sylvie. As I stepped out of the bus I spotted her before she saw me and realize that it was me. I remember the unsure look she had on her face as if it was someone else. Sylvie face went from unsure state to a big happy face with a smile so big I could see her wisdom tooth; yes that's how big her smile was. "Grace" she screamed, as she ran up and hugged me and wouldn't let go for a while. She welcomed me and home we headed. It was a long awaited reunion between me and my friend Sylvie, who I had known back in the refugee camp.

From San Diego to Iowa City, I passed through many states including Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma. The long trip had finally come to an end after two restless nights. All the states I passed through were amazingly beautiful, but the state that captured more of my attention was Iowa City; its kind similar to the land around the refugee camp. It was in the summer, but the weather was cool and windy. There are a lot of trees that bring fresh air. The city is really quiet, not noisy at all.

In Iowa, most places are empty and there are not a lot of buildings. Instead, there are a lot of big farms. Some people have small gardens, and they grow vegetables and others work on the big farms, just like we use to do in the camp. I was there for only six days, but I met a lot of people in Iowa who used to live in the same refugee camp as I did. At the dinner table, we teased about how crazy we were and talked about life back in the camp, especially the stories we had shared under the open skies around bone fires. We talked about farming by hoe, fetching water at pump wells and collecting firewood for the smoky house we lived in. Even if that camp was not truly my home, I accepted it, loved it, and made it my own. Now, finally it seems some of that smoke has cleared. Now, I consider this beautiful land of America my home....



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San Diego Mesa College Humanities Mission Statement

Faculty and staff of the School of Humanities at Mesa College endeavor to foster an environment in which students feel safe taking risks and expressing themselves. We emphasize careful consideration of diverse perspectives and the development of strong critical thinking and communication skills within the context of students using their voices to address issues that touch their lives. Encouraging students to contribute to public dialogue increases awareness of the world, highlights the vitality of thought and expression, and inspires local and global engagement. Our approach is designed to allow students to take ownership of their educational experiences and recognize that the skills developed in the classroom transcend academic life and equip them with tools that will help them achieve success and shape their world.

Become an ESOL Tutor and Help Your Fellow Students!

Do you want more practice speaking English with native speakers, while also helping your fellow students AND get paid for it? Then becoming a tutor in the Writing Center might be a perfect fit for you! Please reach out to Jaime Lenke (jlenke@sdccd.edu) or Jorge Villalobos (jvillalobos@sdccd.edu) for more information!

**Get Paid to Practice
English and Help Your
Classmates!**

ESOL Scholarship—Apply Now!

The ESOL program will select one winner of a scholarship next spring. Please check the Mesa College website for details. From the homepage, under “Paying For College,” click “Scholarships.” Follow the instructions. The application deadline is February 20, 2018. The scholarships will be awarded at a ceremony at the Mission Valley Double-Tree Hotel on Friday, April 20, 2018.



**ESOL Scholarship!
Coming Spring Semester 2017**