



Literacy Aotearoa  
Choice Change Freedom

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## Student Writing

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2014

*Mahi Tahī – Partnership & Collaboration*

*National Student Writing Event*

*22-24 Hōngongoi (July) 2014*

*Waipuna Hotel  
& Conference Centre,  
Mt Wellington, Auckland*

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## Foreword

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Mahi Tahī: Partnership and Collaboration, the theme of this year's National Student Writing Event and National Planning Hui.

*From one of the tutors, Stephanie -*

*It is amazing to witness a group of students from around New Zealand arrive at the Student Writing Event nervous, anxious and shy, then watch them mix, blend and come together, until finally something ignites a spark and we become whānau.*

*From Terisa, one of the students -*

*I would like to encourage you and those that are out there who think you're too old to go to school, or think that you don't know how to write or read. Well, you are not alone, myself and some of my new friends felt and thought the same things, but we got up the courage because there's always something or someone who inspired us to go ahead and do it.*

Mahi Tahī, partnership and collaboration, the essence of what every student and tutor embark on when we engage in learning and teaching. It's always such a privilege to share our different skills and expertise. In Literacy Aotearoa we always talk about sometimes being the teacher, sometimes being learner. We talk about 'ako' and how magic it is that one word can convey the concept of learning and teaching.

As student and tutor we create relationships, we bring our best to these relationships and when we need to, we rely on each other to keep us strong and going forward.

None of us will cease to learn, and importantly we know that we need not be alone in our respective learning journeys.

Mahi Tahī, partnership and collaboration - creating innovation, building resilience and inspiring growth. He Waka Eke Noa – us together, none left behind.

Mauri Ora!

nā Bronwyn Yates QSM

**TE TUMUAKI**



# 2014 National Student Writing Event

## The Students

Agnes	Rameka
Fiona	Robin
Heta	Russell
Jackie	Ruth-Ann
Joann	Shelly
Joseph	Shonnie
Katrina	Terisa
Liam	Tina
Maroline	Tini
Pania	Willie
Paora	



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## *My Tutors at Adult Literacy*

When I open the door at Adult Literacy I feel the aroha and the warmth in there. The first lady I met was Bev. She was waiting for me to sign me onto the course. She made me feel at home. We were talking and Bev said that Rita was going to be my tutor until I knew how to read and write. When I first met Rita she had a beautiful smile on her face and I knew that we were going to get on with one another. She has influenced me and she is helping me a lot.

I'm learning about things that I didn't know. One day I went to course and Bev and Rita asked me if I wanted to go on 'Papa Ako'. I said "yes". They asked me if I wanted to do it at home and I said I would have a try. I was doing good, but when it started to get hard I asked for help. So they asked Polly if she could help me. Polly said "yes". Polly has a lot of patience with me. I don't know how she can put up with me. Polly is a lady that understands me and she gives me confidence. She stayed with me till I had finished my Papa Ako.

These three lovely ladies are so beautiful and helpful. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be here now.

They inspire me to have a dream to help others and to help myself in the future.

Agnes

## *My Flight to Auckland*

My flight to Auckland was late coming here to Auckland.

It was an awesome flight, I really enjoyed it.

I was sitting near the window.

I saw lots of houses when we were taking off from Palmerston North.

I saw the mountain. There was snow.

We saw some fog coming into Auckland.

It was raining.

We arrived at the hui late, about five minutes, because of the weather!

Fiona

## *This is My Life*

Kia ora, my name is Heta. I was born in 1991 in Dannevirke. My mother moved us over to Australia in August 1996. A single mother with four children she moved us to Perth where I grew up and this is where it all started. My life was a bit of a roller coaster, seeing my mum beaten, head nearly severed off with an axe. I was sexually abused by a family member as a child.

So when I hit 14, it all started to change, my life went from being semi ok to hard out smoking weed and drinking. Then it started to escalate when drinking and weed weren't cutting it any more. I moved on to pills, crack meth, and then onto my biggest drug of all, which was violence. Fighting, blood, pain; the adrenaline was unexplainable. I loved it, seeing the fear on their faces because I always used to see my dad beating my mum. So every time I used to fight, I used to picture myself doing that to my dad. I tell you now, that made me angry because the only person in the world I was ever scared of was my father.

Seeing all of that fury coming out of him, now that's where I started to get into trouble with the police. The first time I found myself in a cell was at the age of 15, for being high on Ecstasy. I had drunk two bottles of bourbon and couldn't remember anything. I was told, "Bro, do you remember what you did?" I replied, "Nah, I wouldn't have a clue." The police officer told me, "Bro, you were off your nut. You jumped in front of a car, got hit, and then stood up and started kicking the windscreen and yelling "f###k you dad". I looked at him blankly for a couple of minutes, then said, "And what? It's not my fault I'm like this." That was the first time I was sent to jail, aged 15, thinking I was cool, tough, awesome, and that I would get respect from all my bro's.

For the next seven years I was in and out of jail. So many years wasted on drug abuse, alcohol abuse, most of all, countless days and years sitting in a cell. Ever since I was a kid, I didn't want to grow up to be the man my dad was. As I sat in my cell, it hit me, I had become my dad, with his ways, his violence, his abuse. I knew this had to stop. I couldn't carry on like this. I remember praying one time in my cell, saying along the lines of, "God I can't carry on like this, I need to change, get me out of this bikie club, they're not my family." I asked God, "Please help me, I don't want to be like him. I don't want my son to end up like me."

In April 2013 I got out and went straight back into the largest "Outlaws" motorcycle club in Australia. I was hanging out, but something inside me was telling me, "It's time to leave this lifestyle of endless violence and abuse." I wanted God in my life, but it was still a long road ahead. The club had imposed a \$10,000 fine on me for leaving. Threats to hurt me started in March 2014. So I got into panic mode. I had no one to reach out to, to help me, so the last person I had to reach out to was my dad. My dad took me in. I spent a week with him and in that time he told me how sorry he was for what he did to our family and to Mum. It was then that I forgave him and felt a connection to my dad. I told him I forgave him and he started to cry. It felt like I had found peace with him, he gave me money to fly to N.Z. to start my life over.

Heta

## *Twinkle Time to Wake Up*

I met this young man when he was four years of age. A sweet child, too full of energy, that ran around with sparkles from the stars. His smile caught my eyes and the naughty look in his eyes, I'm innocent he cries, with the Devil's smile.

Never was he innocent, and never was he a Devil, but always somewhere in the middle. You changed my world, you did, and filled my heart with warm cuddles and Devil smiles. A lifetime of memories that will never fade, a lifetime too short.

I'd like to thank you, through your hīkoi you found Mahi Mau Rākau, and our extended whānau became a part of our lives.

Tū waewae takahia, I can hear in my sleep, the cracking of the rākau when your whawhai beats inside of me.

Alive I am, and alive you will always be. Ten years this year, in 2014 we are here, but our rākau is still asleep. Our whānau miss us, time to wake up. Whakarārangi mai and mahi toa te rākau.

Let's patu up my people, I'll show you the way.

Haere Mai.

Jackie

## *My Journey - Present*

By the 6<sup>th</sup> form I had had enough of school and so left when I was 16 years old. My first job was with the New Zealand Customs Department. I have always worked in government departments, including Telecom and the District Courts.

I stopped working when I started having children and I am now a single mum to three beautiful half Samoan teenage children; two girls and a boy, whom I love very much. Although they drive me crazy at times, they also keep me grounded, and keep me real. If it wasn't for my children I may never have entered into the pathway of literacy.

To keep myself busy while at home with the kids, I would help out with the Reading Recovery programme at their school. It would break my heart, actually it pissed me off to see that most of those kids were either Māori or Pacific Island. I would always push the kids to read one extra book every week, they may not have wanted to, but they always did it for me. I hope I made an impact on some of these kids in regards to their reading.

I volunteer at the Wainuiomata Community Centre. I thought getting out and about in the community would be a good way to get to know everyone. I have enjoyed being part of our close tight-knit community of Wainuiomata, where everyone knows, and looks out for each other.

Joann

## *Sometimes I Hate Reading*

I dreamt about people falling from the sky, they had wooden shoes, they fell all the way to the ground. They lay amongst the bright peaceful sun flowers. Lying in a field, only the sound of heavy boots come stomping, armed to the max do they care? Putin the paleface liar, he's the man. He's the Russian man. How do, you spell D.I.C.K H.E.A.D? Putin is just an oligarch - power will be his undoing.

It's bad enough the horror in Gaza. Then again, the soldiers who shot that missile and should have learnt the instructions for firing a missile at harmless people (mostly Dutch). The wooden shoes will never clink and clang again, just lonely screams. I read about this story in the Sunday Star newspaper. It made me feel low in my heart. If I couldn't read maybe I wouldn't feel like that.

But that would make me just as bad as those soldiers who fired that missile because ignorance is a lack of knowledge and understanding. An example is that plane, is it a plane full of dancing Dutchmen, or the enemy? War is ignorance, driven by a lust for power, greed and selfishness. I believe that because I can read, I'm not ignorant, it's the power of the written word. Amen.

Joseph

## *My Boss at the Horseshoe Cafe*

My boss's name is Jolene. She is the owner of the Horseshoe Café. I have been working for Jolene for a year.

Jolene has a year-old daughter named April and a teenage son called Edan. April is my favourite little friend. She is well-behaved and kind. Jolene is a single mum who over the years has raised two kids while owning a business.

She is teaching me to serve customers and helping me to be more confident and to speak more to people. She is the best boss because she is really good to work with. She lives up the same road as me. When I started work there I found it hard but sometimes easy.

I work Wednesdays and Thursdays. I love working at Horseshoe Café. Jolene always encourages me to do my best, despite me being Special Needs. If I could say one thing about her, that would be, she is the funniest and most awesome, kind and wonderful person I have ever met. That is why I like working at the Horseshoe Café.

Katrina

## *A Journey to Life's Limits*

12/11/2011. Sadly the date you see before you is the date when I left school. I do regret it now. Why, is that? Well, I will tell you.

1/1/2012. At the start of 2012 I played video games and ate junk food. My Nan came and got me and took me to SWALA. I was like, "Oh no!" I just got out of school. When we walked in, I put on my charm face as I talked to Sitala. That became a friendship. Then I met 'the sidekick', Steven. He showed me how to play the piano. I loved it, but sadly in the end I gave up.

For a whole year in 2013 my routine was eat, drink, and play Xbox. This is where the limit came in. I drew the line in 2014, I knew now I had to change my lifestyle. "Why is that?" you may ask. The answer is at the end of 2013 there was a photo taken of me and put in the paper. At that moment my heart slowed down, my face began to drop. I thought to myself, what happened? How did this happen and why did no one tell me? All these questions popped in my head. It's like there was a court voting me out of the seat because I did a lazy job of looking after myself. So it was final. The votes were in. I was at the gym. My heart sped up when I jumped on the scales. I weighed in at 102kgs. I didn't believe it. I used to be 68kgs when I was 16.

I'm now 18. Let's jump to it. Two and a half months passed and I was back at the gym. I walked onto the scales feeling like a new person. I weighed in at 74kgs and I felt the cheers inside me, like the court was happy with the new Keeper.

Liam

## *My Experience of Having a Rental Property*

I had a rental property, and I had it for 17 years. It was very hard to get the right people into it. Some of the people were lovely, some couldn't afford the rent, so they moved on, and then I had to get another lot of people in for 12 months. I put it on the market and it was sold within three months.

The property was an asset that I bought when my mum was alive. I bought Mum's house as well and kept the rental property for five years. It was a struggle to find the right tenants, ones who respected the property.

It felt like I had won LOTTO when I sold my property and the money went into my bank account.

Maroline

## *Ma Moko*

The biggest impact that hit me was my grandson. I got a call from my eldest daughter telling me that my moko had a rare cancer, and that hit hard. I thank the Lord for every year that my moko is here with us, four years and counting. The cancer is a small blue cell, which is rare in Aotearoa.

Pania

## *My Speech*

Kia ora katoa.

Ko Rameka tōku ingoa.

Ko Ben Maxwell te ingoa o tōku Pāpā.

Ko Teresa Samantha te ingoa o tōku Māmā.

Ko Otake tōku maunga.

Ko Motu tōku awa.

Ko Mataatua tōku waka.

Ko Te Whānau-ā-Apanui raua ko Te Whakatōhea ōku iwi.

Hi, my name is Rameka. I live in Gisborne. I am currently at Adult Literacy Turanga and I am attending quite a few classes here. I love it here because the tutors are very helpful. It's a shame that I left school at a very young age because I had to go to work with my father. At the time there was no time for reading or writing. At Adult Literacy they are good people to get along with. If it wasn't for these ladies, I wouldn't be here today. I love them for that, but I am sure they are getting sick of me by now. I hope not; naaaa, just kidding. I could praise them for everything they have done for me, but I don't need to, they all know how I feel about them, and that's all I have to say about what we do here at Gisborne Adult Literacy Turanga.

My kids who inspired me to this to make sure they will have a future to look forward to. For this is my dream, all I need to do is to make it come true.

Before I think about owing my own business I need to find a job in construction. This is my stepping stone to my future.

I am not saying when all this will happen, but it will. I just need to make it happen. This is my way of giving something back to my family and community. I have done a lot of things in my life that I am not proud of but like everything else, I will leave all that in the past. Your past doesn't have to be your future, your future is how you make it.

Rameka

## *Willing to Learn*

I grew up the middle one of 11 children, so I fell through the cracks. At 15, I left school and went to work.

I worked in factories where I did not have to read or write. I went to Oz, got married, had a daughter, then I came home to NZ with my daughter and went back to work. Then I had my second daughter, so I read a Golden Book to her.

In 1988 we moved to Mt Maunganui and I went back to work where I had to write, so my work mates would help me.

In 2003 I had to give up work so I decided to go to Literacy and Language Bay of Plenty to learn how to read and write. I had a hard time finding them, but when I found them I was welcomed by Phillipa. Annamaria is the manager now. I have had three tutors over the years. I was asked to go on the committee for Literacy and Language Bay of Plenty as a student representative. This is my second year, and I am enjoying it. My tutors and Annamaria have helped me immensely. I thank them very much.

My main reason for learning is to be President of the Women's Institute. I am Vice President now and have run a meeting which went very well. I am on the committee of our Institute and the Federation for the second time.

My goal is to be President of the Women's Institute, with my learning ability hopefully one day I will get there.

Robin

## *DO NOT REMOVE*

My name is Russell. I am 59 years old. I have been going to sea, fishing, for over 30 years. I was 28 years old when I started as a fisherman (as a cook and deckhand).

We would go to the Auckland Islands and be away for seven weeks scamping small crayfish about 300 miles below Bluff.

Harsh conditions, harsh weather conditions, volcanic and snow on the sea which was frozen. The skipper had a dinghy and a gust of wind blew it over. It had survival gear on it, flares and radio, that all floated away.

The crew dragged the dinghy back on board. The engineer took the motor apart to take the water and salt out of it.

Next day the weather conditions were so harsh we could not stay so we left for Army Bay, where all the whales were making sonic sounds from under the waves. We saw the bucket of flares and the survival kit on the beach there.

The deckhand went to catch the dinghy 250 metres away. The dinghy broke down and we used a launch rope to pull it but it malfunctioned. The skipper had a second one in the wheel-house. Because I am illiterate he said, "I will show you." It had a tag on it saying "DO NOT REMOVE". It malfunctioned and shocked me.

When the skipper removed it, all I heard was a "hiss". I felt a pain and I was on fire. I ran like a road runner. I was burning on my leg and this thing had knocked me off my feet. I rolled around on the deck but I could not put the fire out.

I got my gear off and hit the cold shower under the deck. The fire was still burning. I crushed my shoulder and both my legs were burning. I didn't know that phosphorous could not be put out by water. It put a hole the size of my fist in my thigh. Thirty-six hours later I was in hospital.

I still wake up today screaming in the same position with post-traumatic stress disorder. I am screaming, rolling, trying, trying to put the fire out.

The hospital put me in touch with ACC. My leg was rotten, I was all burnt, my shoulders and arms were bad.

ACC has been a six-year battle. I am losing my wife, my marriage, and feel depressed. I needed help. I went to an ACC physician. The first thing he said was, "Can you read and write?" I said, "You know I can't read and write." Every answer I gave him was negative.

I became suicidal. I was eyeing up trucks to ram my car into.

I went back to the ACC physician and told him what was going on with me. He said, 'I can't help you.'

I was screaming so much at night that I had to sleep in another room. I don't know what is happening. Help me someone!!

My wife can't handle it any more. I can't understand. ACC was letting me feel I was losing my wife, my family and my life.

Six years and I'm tired. I've tried all who can help me, I had no life.

Now I have a physician who is helping me. The physician says I have post-traumatic stress disorder or something like that.

I have been with the Timaru Pou pou for three years. The Pou pou has helped me. I am on the Governance Committee as a Student Representative. I feel privileged to be on the board. My tutor from Timaru is one of the kindest and most understanding people I know.

Now I can read small books. I know I have a future. I can get somewhere. I can now read,

"DO NOT REMOVE".

Russell

## *My Sewing Journey*

When I was a young girl I liked to sew. My dad helped me. When I was about 10 years old he helped me make my first dress, and from then I started to sew. I made all my clothes. He helped me buy my first sewing machine, at 17 years old, when I got my first job. I have made clothes ever since.

I got married and had three children, while with not being able to read a pattern. I looked at kids' clothes, then would make them for them. I sewed all the way through their lives. I have six grandchildren now and I make their clothes. They say, "Nana can you made me this please", and I do. In the latter years I learned how to make quilts and also how to do appliqué quilts.

I get colour-in books and take the pictures from them, get them made bigger and appliqué on to the quilts. I have made all my grandkids a quilt each, Spiderman and Superman, and a quilt with a lot of things on.

My friend Jennie said, "Will you please show me what to do", and I did. Now she has made lots of quilts and taken pictures of what she has done. Then my friend Kim asked if I would show her how to make appliqué quilts, so I did, and she loved it. Now we spend a lot of time together making things. We have great fun. My friend has got twin grandsons so I have made them a quilt each, and I put their baby photos on them. The twins' mum loves the quilts.

My ambition is to make and design kids' quilts and sell them. I get great enjoyment out of putting them together and then seeing the end results.

Ruth-Ann

## *Animal Rescue*

I'm a volunteer at the Upper Hutt Animal Rescue Society. There are cats, kittens and rabbits.

I have a favourite kitten, his name is Elmo. He is fluffy and cuddly and cheeky.

Elmo is ginger and white, with green eyes.

He is gorgeous.

## *Fitz*

We went to the Upper Hutt Animal Society to volunteer.

I went to the Animal Society because there was one grey and white kitten, and his name is Fitz.

He is smooth, and my kids love him.

## *My First Time Being Here at the Student Writing Event*

I was the chosen one

I felt nervous

When I started talking to people

Still shy

I met Serenah at Kōkiri

She made me get my foot in the door

I have five children

I wanted to do it for the kids

Shelly

## *My Beautiful Mum*

In my eyes, my mum is the best mum in the world. She has always been there for me, and she is the most beautiful, kindest, and the most understanding person. Even though I can sometimes be a bit of a pain, I know she still loves me and that she will always be there for me in good times and bad. Even when I am feeling sad and need to talk to someone, I know she will always listen.

Music has always been a part of our family. When I was little Mum and Dad would always have music playing in the background. Me, my brother and my sister - music. On Sundays I sing up front at Church with my mum and my sister.

My mum has helped me in my faith and also how to grow as a young woman. My dad did not believe in God so my mum would pray to God to change Dad's heart. God answered our prayers as my dad became a Christian.

I love Mum so much she has helped me become a better person. She's the best mum ever.

Shonnie

## *My Journey with Literacy - Part 2*

I would love to be a lecturer or a tutor. I know I have to go to University and those places, but what is holding me back is that I'm just not confident enough with writing essays and all that.

Talking about essays, "What are essays?" You see what I mean? Now I know what they are but, writing something down and in my own words is so complicated for me.

I wish they could allow me to write in my own language, so that I wouldn't have a problem with it. For the time being, I just have to complete my one year with Literacy Aotearoa and continue on to Level 3 and 4 in English.

I hope I can achieve what I want because I can get distracted easily. For now, I'm still on the right track. But for how long? I know I just have to concentrate and focus on one thing at a time, until it is time for the next thing.

Sitting here and writing this story, thinking, "My gosh! I actually can write!" What I mean is, the next level in English where I don't have to write like a pupil in primary school.

Commas, full stops, colons, semi-colons; I'm talking about punctuation here. It's so cool to learn these things, otherwise writing this story, you would never understand me. I love learning new things and that's what is helping me to keep going with learning.

My sisters and cousins inspired me to come this far and to go further. My tutors also encouraged me, right from my first English course to the one I'm doing now. I'm a very talkative person and people that know me nod their heads with a shake, saying, "You got that right", or "I'll say." If I'm not like that, I would never get what I want by means of asking questions too!

Now I can correct myself when I say something wrong or if I don't make sense when I'm talking. That's how much I have learnt with Literacy Aotearoa.

I'm nearly at the end of my first step of my journey with Literacy. I would like to encourage you and those that are out there who think you're too old to go to school, or think that you don't know how to write or read. Well, you are not alone, myself and some of my new friends felt and thought the same things, but we got up the courage because there's always something or someone who inspired us to go ahead and do it. It is a very scary journey for me, but I was never alone because my tutors, family and friends were there to support and encourage me along the way.

I'm hoping that I will have an impact on someone who will read my story and get up the courage to take the first step. I wish everyone a safe trip through their journey in life. I never thought I would write a story about me, but I did it!

So if I can do it, you can too!

Terisa

## *A World From Far Away - My Story*

My past, and meeting people from place to place and not really seeing them, was really hard. Going to different schools was challenging. Being teased and bullied, and too scared to speak up was hard. I was suffering in silence.

Being born in America and raised in New Zealand was a hard transition. I, as a person, struggled hard in schools in New Zealand, being teased by teachers and students. I could not show my true potential in life. I was put down a lot, told I could not attend French class or Economics class, because I had no knowledge. I wanted to learn, but they said, "No!" I left school when I was 16 years old.

In my twenties I had two awesome children. They are my daughter, 14, and son, 16. I'm a solo mum and I work as a cleaner, five days a week. Being a mum and a worker is challenging, but I somehow make it.

2008 I found a lump in my right breast and in 2009 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. This was a huge shock for me and my family. I found out who my real support people are. I had six months of chemotherapy and six weeks of radiotherapy. Now, to this day, I'm five years in remission.

A few years back I joined up with Literacy Waikato. I loved learning and thought I should give it a go again. I was scared, felt dumb, and like a loser at the beginning, but when I met my tutor that all changed. My fear changed to happiness. I started to tell my stories of my life and felt alive again. Maths and English can be fun with my tutor, and learning new strategies for maths. I love poems and poetry, my brain is filled with inspiration, sadness and uplifting quotes.

We are One

One of a kind

Be the one to

Show the kindness!

I'm so thankful to have this opportunity to share my experience here at Waipuna Lodge with the Student Writing tutors, as well as meeting new people.

Challenges are real

Challenges are difficult

Challenges are what

Makes us who we are!

The people who are a great influence in my life are, my dad in America, my Auntie Jean in Florida, my brother Nathan, sisters Jennifer, Louisa and Margaret and my counsellor. They help me through my constant ongoing depression.

I look at my life's journey and where I've come from, knowing all my challenges and trials are to make me strong, and to overcome anything that comes my way. My learning difficulties come from being shy and quiet, sitting in the background and observing the world as it goes by.

Writing down thoughts fresh from my head helps me bring out the story writer and poet inside me. I like to write, and through my writing I can express how I am feeling

Peace  
Love  
and  
Happiness.

Tina

## *Love of My Grandson*

When my grandson was three years old I tried to read a book to him and I could not read to him. He read the book to me, so I decided to get help to learn to read.

That is when my journey started. Riley inspired me to learn to read and write.

I want to learn to read so I can read to my grandchildren. At the age of 60 years I decided to get help to learn to read and write, so I went to Adult Learning Support Nelson. I learn how to help myself to learn how to read and write.

I walked around the car park three times before I went upstairs to start my journey to read and write.

Tini

## *I am 50+*

My name is Te Hapuku. I am full blooded Māori. I like going to the Whanganui Learning Centre to learn to read and write.

I didn't like school but now that I can read to my moko and also read my Bible. I like going to church, and I love my family and food. I am enjoying Gail and Linda helping me with my reading and writing.

Over the last few days as I think about God, it is good for me to read the Bible. It took me 20 years to find out that there is a better life. I did some bad sins in the past, but with Jesus' help, life is good!

My story is about change. Drink and drugs were my religion. I was a drug dealer. I went to jail and it changed my life. I do not want my kids and moko to go to jail; it is not a good life.

In my school learning days, I was enjoying school but when it came to reading and writing I was helpless. I could not look after myself at school. Some of the teachers were good and some were not very good at helping me read and write. Sometimes I would get the strap if I did not read. It scared me from going to school altogether.

My cousins used to push paper to me to copy, that's how I got through school. I left college early and went to work young. I have worked ever since and got by.

Willie

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