

"Journal writing gives us insight into who we are, who we were, and who we can become."

-Sandra Mari



THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE - OUR DIGITAL JOURNAL CLASS OF WINTER 2023





RENEW students used their English skills to contribute to this digital journal describing their own American Experience. They focused on one experience they had while living in the United States and sent photographs, wrote paragraphs, or recorded themselves telling their story. Topics ranged from travel experiences, raising children, medical services, and many more...

UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

BY ALWEENA NASIR

Arriving in the USA for the 1st time was both exciting and overwhelming. The country is diverse, and every state has its unique culture, customs, and lifestyle.

As soon as we land in the USA we are amazed by the sights and sounds of our surroundings. The USA is a melting pot of cultures, and we saw people from all walks of life. The food architecture, music, and art are unique and diverse.

However, coming to USA for the 1st time was really challenging for me and my family.

The language, the customs, and the way of life was very different from what we were used to.

After few months reaching in USA, I started learning to drive and the English language, both were very different for me but by the time I got the driving license, and for getting driving license I had to work hard for many, many, months.

It is essential to be patient and open minded, to learn and adopt to a new environment. With time and effort, now we feel at home in the USA and after six years created unforgettable memories.



HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE BY AMAL ALTAHAMI

About a year ago , I went to my neighbor's house, and she had a swing. My son, five years old at the time, was swinging on it, and he fell on his chin, a wound under his lower lip, and he bit his tongue, and he was bleeding. (It was a frightening sight for a mother.) I quickly called 911 to ask for an ambulance, because I do not speak English well, I asked for an interpreter. The ambulance came quickly and took us to the hospital. They were very nice and took good care of us, They told me it was a minor wound that did not need suturing. They gave us some band-aids and some advice, and we went home.



BRAINSTORM - MY FIRST VISIT TO A PUPPY STORE

BY ANTONINA STETSENKO



The history of the origin of the event

The famous New York department store Saks Fifth Avenue decided to inspire people to adopt dogs from shelters. He timed his action to the National Puppy Day. These dogs temporarily settled in one of the store windows. And many passers-by immediately gathered near her. One of the oldest animal rescue organizations in the USA took part in the campaign. She brought 15 puppies. One of the oldest animal rescue organizations in the USA took part in the campaign. She brought 15 puppies. "This is a miracle, a real miracle. And how can you not fall in love with such a face? No, I'm serious, who wouldn't fall in love with her?" National Puppy Day was first celebrated in the USA in 2006.

What should guide us?

- A total of 15 puppies helped touch people's hearts and give other animals a chance to live in love.
- Big changes happen where love is the foundation.
- The result depends on the embedded meaning and feelings.
- No one ever knows what will change life for the better, but you have to try to do it.

Why is it necessary you ask?

- Do not stop doing good even when it is hard and difficult for you
- even when the soul is not warm
- everyone dies without love and grace.

What helps everyone?

1. Helps to remain kind and sensitive.
2. Helps to leave your stress and worries at the doorstep of this store.
3. If you are single, you can feel needed here.
4. This unique store will help you find a loyal friend for life.
5. Here you can find and meet your like-minded people and continue communication.
6. You can give your love to a cute puppy..

Lina Kostenko

I will tell you a secret thought, a strange guess burned me: I will remain in your heart for today, tomorrow, forever.

Feel the changes in yourself

My Opinion...

The very idea of the store is simply wonderful. You can come alone or with your family, choose a puppy, play and understand whether you are ready to bear such responsibility for another life.

Do you have what it takes to make this puppy happy?

This is an important step for everyone. Take a puppy home, a living being that needs to be cared for like a child. Here in the store, you can understand how ready you are for this step, and if you need time, you can just come and visit the puppies that need your love and affection so much.

This store is unique, you can give your love as a gift and get incredible sensations. You can make a puppy happy by taking him home. You help your child to instill a love for animals and an understanding of the relationship with them. I call this place, the place of goodness.



MY EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA BY ASMA ADEEL

In 2020 during COVID the whole World was stuck. Children were not going to school. My children too. They did virtual school at home. My younger son's virtual teacher said to him "Write something about yourself". He did it. After a few days, She called me and said "I am proud of him. I want him to write his book and I will help him." She sent us a book kit by UPS.

She helped him. When his book was complete and his school started again, His virtual teacher, Miss Scott came to his school and talked about his book. His principle was very happy. She talked about the book with the school District and the school gave him an award.

In December, I received a call from the District board. They wanted to have a meeting with me. I didn't know why so I called my friend and I asked her to help me and drop me off at the meeting. When I went with my children and my friend into the board office, They had organized an award ceremony. I was happy and cried.

I am proud of him. He had an interview. After his interview, I searched in Google "Tanzeel Ahmad 6th grader author" and saw his picture on Google. My beautiful Experience in America.



OUR BUNDLE OF JOY - ASH BY ASMA SHEHZADI

Ash is the name of my female and short hair domestic cat. She's 2 human years old. When we got her, she was almost 1. She was a Valentine's day gift from my husband. The moment I saw Ash I fell in Love with her. Her previous owner named her Ash which we decided to keep but now I am thinking of changing her name to Rani which means Queen in Urdu language because she rules everyone nowadays.

Ash is a very gentle cat. My youngest child, Nageen, is 8. Ash took her time to get along with her. At first, she was avoiding her, then Nageen kept on trying to make Ash her friend by giving treats and petting her. Eventually Ash started liking her and she now follows Nageen everywhere.

A couple months ago we had a few guests over. She was already stressed and anxious because of the change. One day we were not home, and our guests let the cat out by mistake. They didn't even notice that Rani sneaked out. Me and my eldest daughter came home and saw that she didn't come to greet us. We started looking for her, but she was nowhere. We were thinking of calling her veterinarian and animal rescue to get some help. I heard a very vague sound of "Meow Meow". I opened my backyard door. She was standing on top of the garage roof very frightened and confused, because she's an indoor cat and never been out. Our neighbors have two big dogs. Ash was scared because of them, I guess... I called her and she just jumped on to my hands! When Rani isn't in the mood of being around humans she hides under my son's bed (so cute). She is a bundle of joy. Every moment we spend with her is fun even when she's sleeping. I'm giving her treats now and writing about her, isn't it fun 😊

MY DAUGHTER'S PASSPORT EXPERIENCE BY AYSHA SALEH

I made an appointment at the nearest post office.

Prepare documents:

Birth certificate

Photos

Parents ID

Money

Appointment day

This day was the hardest day for me because I went with my daughter. I had to carry her in the car seat, the stroller and the baby bag.

Next harder part.

I waited there in the line for a long time with my crying baby and then, when my turn came, I gave the lady all the documents but there was a mistake. The baby shouldn't have the head tie on her head in the passport photo. Then, I looked for somewhere nearby to get a new photo without the head tie. Finally I found a Walgreens pharmacy. I took her photo there and I went back to the post office fast.



**UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE**

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VISIT TO THE MARYLAND ZOO BY CELINA MARTINEZ

On August 27, 2022, my family and I went to the Maryland Zoo. It was a great experience for me and my Childrens.

Upon arrival at the place, it was so beautiful that we went to take photos, we paid the entrance fee and the tour inside the Zoo began first. What we saw was how they had the animals in small cages, and they were already all ugly, with grass and deteriorated and we kept walking and there were signs explaining the history of each animal.

We kept walking and we arrived at the Zoo and the first thing we saw were the penguins and pelicans. I had them in a large area so that they have their space and that all the animals had a plate on their wings to identify them.

We continued the tour and visited the Flamingos, are beautiful animals, because of their pink pigmentation, it is because they eat shrimp.

We continued walking through beautiful corridors full of vegetation and advertisements. We arrived at the area of the Elephants and the Giraffes are huge animals, but it made me sad to see them locked up there and with so much heat I would like them to be in habitat for them.

What I liked the most was that the animals kept them clean and with a lot of food. My Family and I spent a very recreational and fun day because we got to know the old zoo, which dates back to 1876, and the new zoo, which is actually beautiful. My children were surprised by all the animals they have.





ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER BY CELINA MARTINEZ

Being a mother is a very important change that carries a significant emotional charge, but when the child has a disability, the changes will be greater, it is normal that when hearing the news, the feelings are very different from those expected and we had stages with doubts, anxiety or stress.

As a Mother, I felt free to express my feelings without receiving criticism from my family and friends, because nobody knows what it is like to live with a child with a disability until he knocks on your door. At school, the doctor, his therapists and at home we help him to understand how he should express himself so that little by little they will help my son have health, quality of life and a very promising future. Hoping he can fend for himself.



RAMADAN AND HOSPITAL IN THE U.S. BY HANAN KHALID

I am happy for Ramadan in the U.S. I go to the mosque for tarawih and meet new friends. My daughter and I also go to the hospital because I feel the hospital is good and has better service.

MEET NEW FRIEND IN THE US BY DIBA AZIZ

I came to US and met new friends. I have a lot of friends in the U.S and a lot of Afghan friends and invite friends together for food. I enjoy hosting friends in my home.



GOLDEN GATE BRIDE BY HINA SHAFIQ

This is the Hollywood sign which is located in Los Angeles. It was very bright and sunny day when I went there, and I was so happy to see this sign of Hollywood, because I had always seen this sign in Hollywood movies. This was the first time I saw this sign with my naked eyes.



WHAT I WANT TO DO! BY MURSAL SHARIFI

- I study English
- I want to work
- I love to visit my country



MY TRIP TO DESTIN, FLORIDA - A GREAT EXPERIENCE BY NADIA BAJREKTAREVIC

- Went to Destin, Florida for March Break
- Rented a Condo
- Went to beach every day
- Visited the famous Harbor Walk Village
- Adventure place with rides
- Boat ride
- Exciting to see dolphins
- Took lots of pictures





HOW TO GET US NATIONALITY (CITIZENSHIP) BY NASEERA SADIQA

First of all, I went to the website online and filled the forms. After a few days I received the email for fingerprints appointment date - example (08/15). I went there to fingerprints.

They gave me a test book. Then I returned home after some days I prepared to do my test. Sometimes I prepared online and sometime read a book. After one year, I received one email about my appointment for the test. I went there, when I entered the building, there was a huge line they checked your bags for security. After that processing I reached the big hall. So many people over there sat on the chairs, I sat on a chair too and waited for my turn. After 30 to 40 minutes, my turn came. I was scared and confused. When I entered the room one person sat on a chair and I sat too. He started to talk to me. He was very nice and humble person. He ask questions and I gave him answers, and after some minutes I was done. He gave me a letter, and he said congratulation, you have passed this test. He gave me an appointment letter for my oath. After 15 days I went there again and took the oath. Finally, I got my nationality (citizenship).

MY FIRST FISHING TRIP IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

BY RAFAT BUTT

We went to Rhode Island to fish with friends for “Stripers and Sea Bass”!

Trip Preparations:

- Booked a charter boat
- Warm clothes
- Wake up early and be on time
- Come with smiles and fingers crossed

I learned about fishing:

- How to hold a rod
- How to use a reel
- How to bait a hook
- And most important, how to feel the bite!



Our Catch:

- We caught lots of fish
- We threw the small ones back
- Only 8 keepers
- About 13lbs of fish

Biggest Fish of the Day!

- The striped bass is the state fish of Maryland, Rhode Island, and South Carolina, and the state saltwater (marine) fish of New York, New Jersey, Virginia and New Hampshire

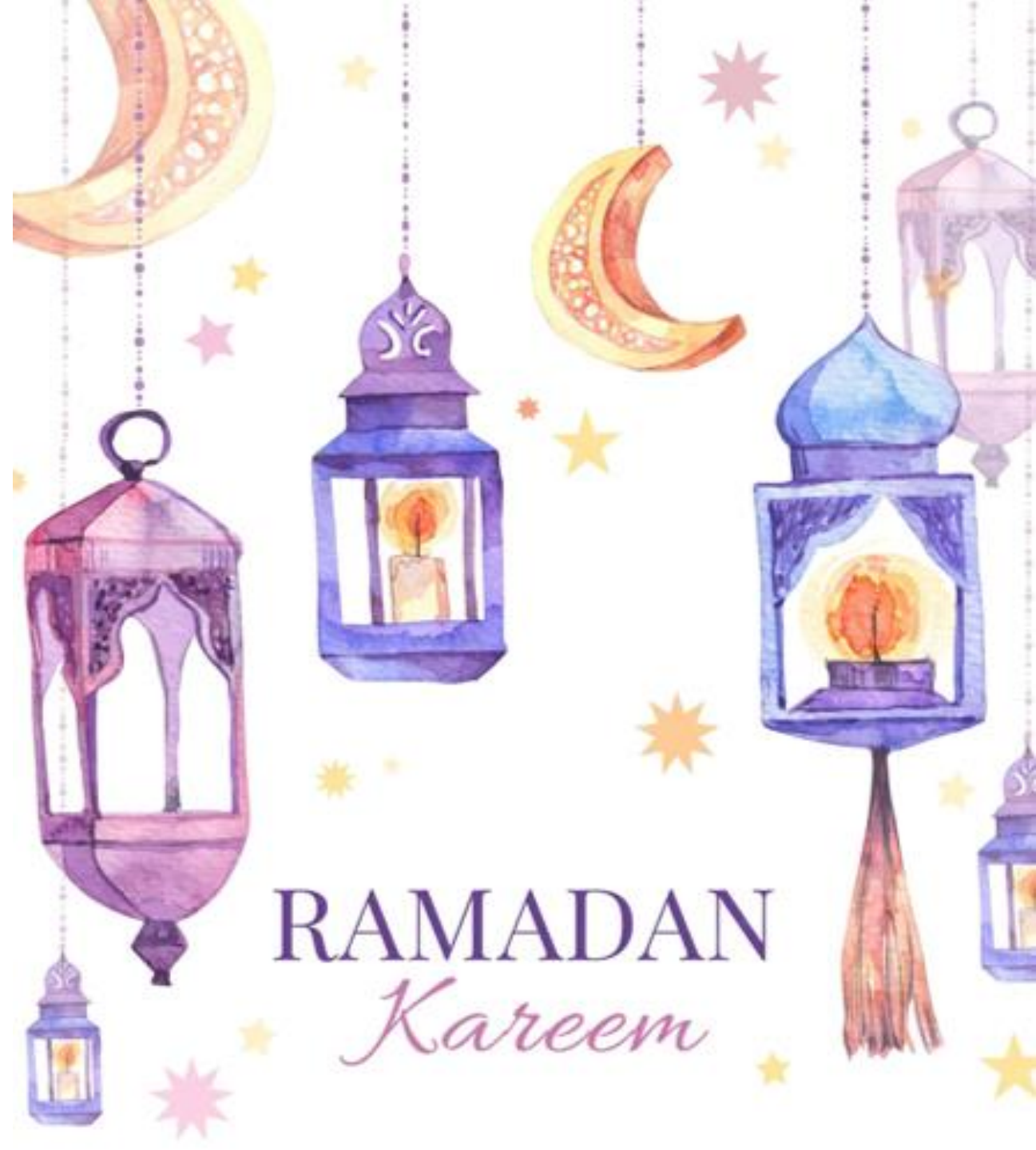
Tastiest Fish of the day!

- Black sea bass prefer structured habitats such as reefs, wrecks, or oyster beds in temperate waters
- In the Mid-Atlantic they migrate seasonally as water temperature changes
- They generally migrate to inshore coastal areas and bays in the spring and offshore in the fall

Fresh Sushi & Grilled Sea Bass Yum!!! It was different and great experience for me that I find hard to explain in words, I just want to go again and again!

RAMADHAN IN THE US BY SAYYEDA BEGUM

Ramadan in the U.S. I agree with Shaesta. When I first moved here, I didn't like I didn't feel it. But after we go to the big mosque Saturday Sunday and meet friends. I started to make a lot food during Ramadan for Iftari and shared it with my neighbors they were happy. They know we have Ramadan or Ramadan, and it makes me a little bit happy. Every Ramadan now I make food and share food with neighbors. This is after three years I moved to the United States. My other friend also every week in Ramadan we cook for homeless people. I am so happy, as a Muslim, we are helping those who are homeless very week around 100 - 140 people. As a Muslim we have to show in this country, we have to show our food morals and good behavior that's why we do this as part of Ibadat.



RAMADAN
Kareem

RAMADHAN IN THE US BY SHAESTA MOMAND RAHMANI

I don't think I didn't feel good the Ramadan in the us. Ramadan in my country is very beautiful, everyone is celebrating like tarawih and reading Quran, we very enjoy it. In here I don't feel the ramadan. After Iftar people come to the mosque for tarawih and khatam Quran. We have azan 5 times in here I cannot feel it and iftar alone.



JOURNEY FROM PAKISTAN TO THE USA BY SUMERA MEHBOOB

Me and my two children got US visas. We got ready, bought tickets, visited our relatives and got on our flight. We were very thrilled and excited. Everything was because of the grace and blessings of GOD.

Because of air pressure and weather, the flight was sometimes unbalanced. We were afraid of being so high in the sky. Anyway, we enjoyed all the way. We had delicious dishes and watched movies.

But we couldn't sleep the entire way.

We had a stay for two hours in Dubai. After that we started our journey again. During the flight, we listened to some of our favorite songs. Sometimes we gossiped with each other. Anyway, our flight arrived at the airport on time in New York.

We thanked GOD and came out of the airport with our luggage. My husband was waiting outside the airport. We were very happy to see each other. Everything was new for us. It seemed like we were on some other planet!

That day it was like we were on a blue moon. At last, we reached home with full pleasure. Thank God!





VISIT TO WHITETAIL RESORT BY TANZILA AMBER

A few weeks ago, I went with my husband and daughter to Whitetail Resort Mercersburg, PA. It is a snowboarding resort.

It was a new experience for me and my daughter. People have been ice boarding on hills, and it looks great. It was very cold, about 18 degrees Fahrenheit and very windy on that day. Because I don't like cold weather, we stayed there for a very short time. It is a beautiful place to visit in winter. I will go there again when the weather gets better and spend time there.

This place is awesome and close to my home. I had some pictures taken when we were there. It was too cold, so I was not able to take a lot of pictures. I hope you like this place.



AN ACCIDENT BY TANZILA AMBER

I migrated to the USA in December 2021. After a few days I went shopping with my husband. We did our shopping and while we were on the way back to our home we got in an accident. We were on the highway in front of us all traffic was stopped. We were also standing, a car came from the rear and hit us really hard. I got injured in that accident and so was my husband. People get out of their cars and help everyone involved in the accident. Rear car driver was also injured. Someone from there called the police and ambulance, in a very short time. The ambulance, police and fire truck were there. Police officer was very nice and respectful which was a new thing to me because in my home country the police are very rude and no one helps you there. Ambulance took us to hospital and we were treated. Hospital did not ask for any money from us; they treated us very well. Hospital did all the tests and provided us with all the medicines.

In my home country, I remember when my mom was sick and I took her to hospital in that hospital they didn't have a bed or room. Doctor even didn't check her or give any medicine and staff was very rude. I took my mom to another hospital and that hospital was little kind to my mom but they told me to pay first before they start treatment and the doctor was very nice and polite to us. He treated my mom very well.

Unfortunately our mom is not with us.

In my home country If you get in an accident, no one will come to help you there and the hospital will not start treatment without paying first.

It is a great thing in the USA. It was a memorable experience for me.

SHOPPING IN USA BY NUSRAT SALEEM

I have following experience on first sight. I felt that such stores which sell our traditional country products they imports on cheaper rates and selling in USA very higher rates. They are taking advantage for instance. When my mother came to USA, we go to the store to buy cot for her, the price of cot in back home was maximum \$100 but they were selling \$1,000, which was not acceptable but I had no choice I bought it. I felt same situation several times on different products.

I hope everybody feeling the same, business does not mean robbing the people.





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