

From Julie Arneth

Having taught ESL at Literacy Green Bay for many years, my students have told numerous stories about their families, their jobs, and their experiences in our community. When they write about families we spend time talking about parents, brothers, and sisters and how they keep in touch especially if their families are not in the United States. These poignant stories are often heartbreaking and bittersweet, but frequently they are greeted by their classmate's smiles, laughter and knowing nods of agreement. .

I remember Margarita a young woman who worked at a local meat-packing plant. She had a beautiful young daughter living with her in Green Bay, but sadly she had to leave her son behind in Nicaragua. She tried unsuccessfully for many years to find a way for him to emigrate from Nicaragua to the United States, and I do not know if she was ever successful. Yet, Margarita's story has a sweet side. She continued to work, married a wonderful man she met on the job, and they had a child, an active, fun-loving baby boy. Meanwhile, her daughter went on to graduate from high school, Margarita's story is similar, with just a little twist, to those told by each class whether my students are Hmong, Latino, Somali or any other nationality.

