



PROSPECT  
PARK

New Americans Welcome Center

# My Favorite Place

By Xue Wen Li

My favorite place is the top of mountains. I was born in a small village located on a famous plateau in China. There are many mountains around our village. One of them is up to 4,500 meters high compared to the horizon line, so I have liked climbing mountains since I was young. When I climb a mountain, I really enjoy the scene coming to my eyes -- unknown wildflowers, wild animals, and colorful leaves. Everything seems novel and makes me feel marvelous. When I finally arrive at the top of a mountain, I always embrace nature with my open arms. The wind blows in my face and I listen to the sounds of nature, which is a fantastic feeling for me. I can also look out over the beautiful landscape around the mountain when I reach the top. There are always a lot

more views than on the ground. In addition, I can enjoy different scenery in different seasons, like being saturated with splendid colors in Spring or marveling at the mountain ridge in Summer. I have been charmed by the harvest scene in autumn and awed by the endless white world in winter. I still remember the impressive moment when I climbed to the top of Whiteface Mountain in Upstate New York, on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. A breathtaking spectacle spread itself out before my eyes. I saw the whole of Lake Placid. Some white sail boats were sailing on the lake, and surface of the lake was reflecting golden sunshine. How peaceful and glamorous it was! My wife, daughter, and I all drank in the beauty of this scene. That is why the top of mountains is my favorite place.

### About the Writer:

Xue Wen Li, known as Bertly Li, was born in a mountain village in Yunnan Province, China. He came to New York as a visiting Economics scholar from Columbia University. He has a wife and a three-year-old daughter, and looks forward to seeing his daughter grow up happy and healthy. He attends ESOL classes at the Prospect Park YMCA's New Americans Initiative program.



NAWC 2019 Friendship Day Event at The Park Slope Armory YMCA.

# NAWC

## NEWS & EVENTS



*"Everywhere immigrants have enriched the fabric of American Life."*

-- John F. Kennedy

### **FRIENDSHIP DAY 2019:**

The PPY NAWC celebrated its Friendship Day on Wednesday, February 20. It was planned, organized and hosted by NAWC participants. They decorated the rooms with flowers, balloons, red and hot pink name tags and garlands. Guests enjoyed a plethora of food from many countries; including Morocco, Columbia, Mexico, Ukraine, Ecuador, Poland, China, Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Russia. Bags of candy were also distributed for families to take home. All together 45 guests came together to strengthen the connection and sense of community they have built in the safe space provided by the Prospect Park YMCA.



NAWC 2019 March End of  
2 Cycle Celebration.

### **CUNY Citizenship NOW! Event:**

On Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> the NAWC hosted CUNY Citizenship NOW event at the Park Slope Armory YMCA, where 30 individuals attended. From assistance with completing the naturalization application to applying for DACA eligibility, everyone had an individual story.

The people that were assisted at the event represented a very diverse list of countries.

**Key to the City:** The NAWC collaborated with NYIC in holding the Family Resource Fair on April 13, to reach out to communities in Kensington and Midwood.

**Cinco de Mayo:** In collaboration with Sunset Park Center, the NAWC held Cinco de Mayo for the communities in Sunset Park.

The NAWC also attended the **Brooklyn Answer** event in collaboration with Office of Assembly Member Robert Carroll on May 19.

**"Jersey Boys":** On May 29<sup>th</sup>, the NAWC staff and participants went to see the Broadway show "Jersey Boys". Participants appreciated the opportunity provided by YMCA to see the world famous show which they were excited to see.

### **Success Stories:**

**Karen** completed her PCA certificate course and got job in the same field. **Mitsuyu** Mt. Clair entered a one year certificate course as a Massage Therapist. **Hansenys** entered Pre-HSE while attending the Intermediate ESL.



CUNY Citizenship NOW! Event at the  
Park Slope Armory YMCA.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

**A Journey:  
From PPY NAWC to  
US vs. El Chapo.**

**Juan Vazquez arrived in New York in the Fall of 2017 looking for a better future. He registered and joined The Prospect Park YMCA's New Americans Welcome Center in the Spring of 2018.**

**Juan was a journalist in his native country, Mexico. He aspired to be a journalist in the United States. He wrote essays during his stay in the program and read them at NAWC celebrations.**

**Juan proclaims that his participation in NAWC gave him encouragement to continue to pursue his dream of becoming a journalist in the United States. He stated that the dedication of PPY NAWC staff helped him improve his self-confidence, and he was hired by Yahoo.com to cover The US vs. "El Chapo" Trial, in Spanish. He informed NAWC that he will be present at "El Chapo's" sentence hearing in June 2019.**

**The Prospect Park YMCA, and especially the New Americans Welcome Center wish Juan success in all future journalistic adventures.**



Yahoo.com Journalist and former NAWC participant, Juan Vazquez

## STUDENTS SHARE THEIR STORIES:

### Abstruse Wish

By: Iaroslav Roik

When I was a child, there was a time when people congratulated each other using mostly greeting cards.

On my seventh birthday I received a few of those nice cards from friends and family members, wishing me a happy birthday.

One of them was from my grandmother.

At that time I had just started reading and understanding. I read my grandmother's greeting card loudly and slowly thinking about each word in it. My grandmother wished me good health. I knew what good health meant.

Rather, I knew how it was bad to have some illness. That was a very good wish. The second was happiness. I knew what that was – new toys, playing with parents and friends. Also, there was a wish that I was good pupil. I knew what that was. Her next wish was... was one thing I could not understand. It was a wish of peace.

What did peace mean? Why did my grandmother wish it for me?

Years and years later, unexpectedly, I remembered my grandmother's greeting card and her wish for me...

We as humans have and own money, clothes, cars, houses, and a lot of different things but only rarely do we have peace. Can we really

only appreciate what diamonds we have? What will we leave our younger generation? It will be good to leave them peace. So, wish for peace, pray for peace, make toasts for peace, save peace, be strong to protect peace, and be happy to live in peace.

#### About the Writer:

Iaroslav is a native Ukraine. Along with his wife and daughter, he came to United States three years ago. Iaroslav studies English at the Prospect Park YMCA's NAI program. For his whole life Iaroslav did not enjoy writing, but he has now developed a taste for writing essays and short stories thanks to his classes at the Y. He also thanks the Y for allowing him the opportunity to find friends from all over the world. His Program Director is Nabila Khan and his instructor is Donna Powers.



NAWC took a trip to see "Jersey Boys".





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YMCA New Americans Initiative  
5 West 63rd Street; 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10023  
(212) 875-4336  
www.ymcanewamericans.org

## What Kind of Animal

by: Katarzyna Janowska

When I think of myself as an animal, I am torn between an elephant and a raven. Both of them are smart, learn easily and don't have any natural enemies. Except of course, for the humans who could hunt or kill them. That's why these animals can live relatively long and safe lives.

As an elephant I could be really powerful and strong. But, on the other hand, I could be empathetic. I could live with my family and other elephants and travel freely through the savannah enjoying life as part of the group. I would be almost as smart and social as a human.

As a raven I would fly and see the world from above. However, like the raven from the Tower of London, I could live very, very long and feel absolutely safe.

Both of these animals have the ability to learn from their mistakes as well as from each other. They can communicate and share with others their experiences. They are really able to solve problems they find during their lives.

As I looked at these two animals, the elephant and the raven, I realized that I want to be an animal that is closest to the

human as possible. So, that means I want to be a human.

### About the Writer:

Katarzyna Janowska was born in Poland, 60 years ago. She came to the US in 2014 and settled in Brooklyn, NY. Kasia, as she is known, loves Brooklyn and Prospect Park where she always walks her dog Homer. She likes writing funny stories about her life in Brooklyn. Kasia studies English in the NAI Program at the Prospect Park YMCA. The program director is Nabila Khan and the instructor is Donna Powers.

New Americans Initiative Director  
Rachael Rinaldo  
rrinaldo@ymcanyc.org  
646-599-7607

Bronx YMCA NAWC  
2125 Glebe Ave. Bronx NY 10462  
Selenie Villar, NAI Director  
svillar@ymcanyc.org  
718-829-1564

Danielle Rucker, NAI Coordinator  
drucker@ymcanyc.org  
718-829-1564

Chinatown YMCA NAWC  
100 Hester Street, NY, NY 10002  
Jie Ling Chen, NAI Director  
jchen@ymcanyc.org  
212-219-8393

Chloe Yuen, NAI Coordinator  
oyuen@ymcanyc.org  
212-219-8393

Flushing YMCA NAWC  
138-46 Northern Blvd., Flushing, NY 11354  
Michelle Lam, NAI Director  
mlam@ymcanyc.org  
718-551-9353

Samuel Forrest Williams,  
Community Partnership Specialist  
samwilliams@ymcanyc.org  
718-551-9350 x6511

Harlem YMCA NAWC  
180 W. 135th St.  
New York, NY 10030  
Jim Anderson, NAI Director  
jaanderson@ymcanyc.org  
212-912-2163

Gaëlle Muzac, NAI Coordinator  
gmuzac@ymcanyc.org  
212-912-2163

Prospect Park NAWC  
357 9th St., Brooklyn, NY 11215  
Nabila Khan, NAI Director  
nkhan@ymcanyc.org  
212-912-2593

Staten Island YMCA NAWC  
285 Vanderbilt Ave., SI, NY 10304  
Joanna Springstead, NAI Director  
jspringstead@ymcanyc.org  
718-981-4382, ext. 17

Regina Marks, NAI Coordinator  
rmarks@ymcanyc.org  
718-981-4382, ext. 15

Darragh Murphy  
Counselor/Ed. Case Manager  
dmurphy@ymcanyc.org  
718-981-4382 ext. 26

New Americans Initiative  
Lorna Blancaflor, NAI Director  
lbiancaflor@ymcanyc.org  
718-551-9351

at the Flushing YMCA Branch  
138-46 Northern Blvd.  
Flushing, NY 11354  
Betül Ozdemir, NAI Coordinator  
718-551-9353

at the Flatbush YMCA Branch  
1401 Flatbush Ave.  
Brooklyn, NY 11210  
Victoria Quintanal, NAI Coordinator  
718-469-8100