

WRITINGS, Inspired Youth Tutoring Program

Volume 20, Number 4, May 2008

BIOGRAPHIES

Written by students of the Inspired Youth Tutoring Program, Chicago, Illinois

CRISTIANO RONALDO and RONALDINHO, by Gustavo Valencia, 7th grade

Well, this is a story about a soccer player named Cristiano Ronaldo. He is from Portugal. He is my favorite soccer player, but my other first soccer player is Ronaldinho. He is the best soccer player in the world. They play very good. I like the skills of both in a soccer game. Ronaldo doesn't like losing but Ronaldinho doesn't care about losing or winning. Oh, I forgot my other soccer player is Messi. He is from Argentina. He liked soccer when he was five years old. He and Ronaldinho play for Barcelona. Ronaldinho is number ten. Messi is number 19. Ronaldo plays for Manchester United. He is number seven. I wish I could play for America or Manchester United or Barcelona or my best team in the world, Cruz Azul.

I am a big fan of Cristiano Ronaldo. I play just like him. I do his skills. He plays for Manchester United and Portugal. Ronaldinho is the best player in the world. He won a World Cup with Brazil. He got some crazy skills that I can't do. I could do one move of his. It's called the snake and bicycle.

... Today I have a big game in the semifinals with Calaya. It's my life to become champion with Cosmos. I'm going to play my best to become champion with Cosmos because Cosmos never became champion and today is the big game. I can't wait to play.

... Today is the big game for me because our team is in the finals and it's a special game for me because the crowd will cheer me and I could do my best soccer skills, and I want Cosmos to become champion so I could hold the Windy City Cup.

PELE, by Gustavo Valencia, 7th grade

Pele is the best soccer player in the world. He became World Cup champion about six or five times. He was in the Hall of Fame with three young best players, Kaka, Cristiano Ronaldo, and Messi. Last Saturday I played the finals and we won the championship. It was the best day of my life. Last year I also became champion. I became a two time champion.

RUBY BRIDGES, by Myanna Smith, 5th grade

I read a story about a girl named Ruby Bridges. She was born in Tylertown, Mississippi. Her family was very poor and her father worked picking crops. They moved to New Orleans in 1967 because her father lost his job.

Ruby Bridges is famous because she got accepted to a school named Franz Elementary School at the age of six, and also because the school she got accepted to was a white school and she was African American. Now she is known for bravery and has a lot of courage because when she would come to school the white kids would call her names and want to hurt her but she told God to forgive them.

I think this is important to most people because now we could all go to school and not be fighting and arguing about our race. Ruby Bridges is still an outstanding person because she stood up for us at a young age. That's why we thank her.

SACAGAWEA, by Abigail Peralta, 5th grade

Sacagawea was a great person. She was born in 1778 or 1779. She was part of the Shoshone tribe. She helped Lewis and Clark on their expedition. She was such an important person that she has a golden dollar with her face on it.

Sacagawea was born in 1778 or 1779. When she was ten a Native American tribe attacked her tribe. Her mother was killed and she was captured. They took her back to a tribe even though she didn't speak that language. Also they got food different than her tribe.

In 1804 Lewis and Clark, two white explorers, came and bought Sacagawea. She helped them on a journey to the Pacific Ocean. Before they left in 1805 she became pregnant and her son Jean Baptiste was born in February.

In conclusion, she helped Lewis and Clark greatly on the expedition. She is a great role model. That's how she had her face engraved on a golden dollar.

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL, by Daniel Arvidez, 8th grade

Alexander was a man that made a telephone. He was born in Scotland, he had an older brother. He moved to Canada because he was sick and his brother died. Teaching deaf people to talk was his job.

Alexander was still teaching deaf people, and also was experimenting with sounds. Alexander showed people how they talk and the audience was surprised that he taught deaf children to talk. George Sanders offered to give a working place for Alexander.

Alexander invented a telephone. He did it with an assistant named Thomas Watsen. When he got to invent a telephone he and his

assistant were surprised that they made to it make a telephone. They spilled water on it and the telephone worked.

RAY CHARLES, by Ashton Brown, 6th grade

Ray Charles Robinson was born in 1/23/1930 and died on 5/10/04. He was known as Ray Charles. He was a pioneering American pianist and musician who shaped the sound of rhythm and blues. He is also known as Brother Ray and The Genius. Ray Charles was 73 when he died. He was the son of Aretha Williams and Billy Robinson. The two were never married though Ray and his family moved to Florida when he was an infant.

Ray was six when he began to turn blind. He became blind at the age of seven. He attended St. Augustine School for the Deaf and the Blind in St Augustine, Florida. He also learned how to write music and play various musical instruments. His mother died followed by his father two years later. Ray scored his first hit single with the label with "It Should Have Been Me," and "Mess Around," both making the chart in 1953.

Ray recorded a cover version of the Japanese band Southern Stars song. It sold more than 400,000 copies, and became the year's best selling single by a Western artist for the Japanese music market. In the late 1980's and 90's, Charles performed and appeared in new vignettes where he was somehow driving a car.

GEORGE LUCAS, by Luis Lopez, 7th grade

Lucas was born in northern California in Modesto. Lucas went to college for two years, then he went to University of Southern California. He had a very difficult time in high school cuz it was boring. Lucas crashed on the race that ruined his career as a race car driver. He wanted to be a producer and a writer cuz he wanted to make his own film without nobody telling him what to do. Lucas raises two daughters and they're very important to him a lot.

THE WRIGHT BROTHERS, by Kevin Luu, 5th grade

Orville and Wilbur were born in the late eighteen hundreds and lived in Dayton, Ohio and they invented airplanes.

The Write brothers studied how birds and kites fly and got interested with flying. They tested different kinds of wings in their wind tunnel. They had problems because they keep on spinning around because the tail wasn't right.

Their discovery is important because it helps people get to far distances and you can't get to places because it's miles away and you can only get there on water or in air and a boat takes longer than a plane.

BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS EDISON, by Uriel Dominguez, 7th gr.
Thomas Edison was born in 1847. He is remembered for being one of America's best inventors. He began his interest in the sciences at age 9 when he began experimenting in chemistry. Edison's first job was at age 12. He worked on the train selling candy and newspapers. In order to keep up his education he would read in the library in Detroit every day.

After working on the train for a while, Edison found a way to set up a chemistry lab on the train. Edison was always conducting experiments, asking questions, and soon set up a printing press while riding the train. However, Edison's experiments came to an end when one of his bottles of chemicals started a fire on the train.

After saving the son of a telegraph operator, Edison learned how to operate a telegraph machine. Then at the age of 16 Edison began to work as a telegraph operator at a railroad. One of his first inventions was a wheel fixed to a clock that would tap out a message every hour to show he was not asleep at the job, while actually he was sleeping. As an inventor, Edison is known for having invented many of his own devices, as well as improving other's inventions. Some of Edison's greatest inventions are the light bulb, wireless telegraphy, and a phonograph. He improved the telephone, as well. In 1928 Edison was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for being America's most useful citizen.

SADAKO, by Yulisa Rabadan, 5th grade

The book Sadako by Eleanor Coerr is about a girl struggling with cancer. Sadako's struggle with cancer was the result of an atom bomb. In my paragraph I am going to talk about Sadako's struggles. Sadako lived in Japan in the city of Hiroshima. Her grandma had died because of the bomb that the American Army dropped on Hiroshima. However, Sadako was happy. She liked to race. One day when she was racing, she became sick. Sadako was sick because of the bomb. She had cancer.

Sadako wanted to make a thousand paper cranes because if she did, she could make a wish. She almost finished. She made 644 cranes and then she died. Her classmates finished the cranes for her so that she could make a wish.

Sadako's friends built a statue of Sadako in Hiroshima Peace Park. Every year on Peace Day, children leave cranes at the statue. They do this because they hope one day peace will be in the world.

Even though Sadako's life was short, she is important because it shows that the wars kill people and it is not good.

CHRISTOPHER ZORICH, by Corzay Young, 7th grade

Christopher Zorich is a famous football player and played for the Chicago Bears. Chris grew up on the South Side of Chicago. He was growing up in a biracial family, and people kept sending his mom hate mail and kept damaging his house. His family was in need of food and that he had to wait in line at a church to get food

What he is famous for is that the Notre Dame football team was bad and he had to go there to play for them and he was voted to be MVP at the Orange Bowl.

He helps people in need. For example, on Mother's Day for women in shelters Chris gives them corsages. For kids he takes them to home Bears games that he goes to and then takes them out to dinner.

KOFI ANNAN, by Abel Weldemichael, 6th grade

Kofi A. Annan of Ghana was the seventh Secretary-General of the UN. His first five-year term started in January 1997, and he started a second five-year term on 1 January 2002. He believe in peace and security, invites the rule of law and human rights, restoring public confidence in the organization by reaching out to new partners and, in his words, by "bringing the UN closer to the people."

Kofi was born in Kumasi, Ghana on 8 April 1938, and studied at the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, and he completed undergraduate work in economics at Macalester College in the US during the year 1961. During 1961 and 1962 he undertook graduate studies in economics at the Institut Universitaire des Hautes Études Internationales in Geneva. During 1971-1972 he received a Master's degree in management.

Mr. Annan joined the UN in 1962, worked for the World Health Organization in Geneva. At UN Headquarters in New York, Mr. Annan held senior positions in a diverse range of areas, and human resources management (1987-1990), budget and finance (1990-1992), and peacekeeping (March 1992-December 1996).

Before becoming Secretary-General, he got a number of special assignments, and he worked hard for the assignments, and resolved the issues between different countries and the Security Council. As Secretary-General, he tried to find a cure for HIV/AIDS.

Kofi A. Annan is well versed in English, French, and several African languages. He got married to Nane Annan, of Sweden, a lawyer and painter. She has also written a book for children about the U.N. They had three children.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG, by Andre Tripp, 8th grade

This person's name is Louis Armstrong. He also goes by these nicknames, Satchmo and Ambassador Satch. He was born on July 4, 1900 in New Orleans. He also had a poor family. He had to work

really hard to get five dollars for his first cornet. His inspiration was Bunk Johnson.

They traveled north to Chicago when he was 21 years old. This is when he became successful. He is famous for the songs he wrote which are "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Tiger Rag," and "Hello, Dolly!" He appeared in some musicals too. He is the most famous trumpeter in the history of popular music. Satchmo died in New York City on July 6, 1971.

Louis Armstrong can be an inspiration to poor people. He worked really hard and became successful.

ZORA NEALE HURSTON, by Latrice Tripp, 10th grade
Zora Neale Hurston, born January 7, 1891, Notasulga, Alabama. At a very young age she moved to Eatonville, Florida, spending her childhood there. Eatonville was the first all Black town to be incorporated in the U.S.

Zora Neale Hurston is known for writing books. Her first book that Zora ever wrote was *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. This book became very known all around the world.

Zora Neale Hurston is famous for writing books that had a language that she spoke in the South.

SANDRA CISNEROS, by Betzabe Acevedo, 9th grade
Sandra Cisneros was born on December 20, 1954 in Chicago, Illinois. She was the only girl in the family. When she was little, her and her family moved around Chicago's South Side. Eventually her family was able to buy a house but it wasn't exactly the house of her dreams. She got her English Degree from Loyola University. Then she got her Master's Degree in creative writing at the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop. After she received her degrees she taught English and creative writing around different universities.

Sandra Cisneros is a well known Hispanic author. Some of her famous books are "The House on Mango Street," "Caramelo," "Woman Hollering Creek," and other stories. She has been recognized for her work with writing awards. For example: The American Book Award, Lannan Literary Award, and the Paisano Dobie Fellowship. Her writing was influenced based on her experiences in life, including her childhood, family, and friends. For example: "The House on Mango Street" had to do with the house her family bought, "Caramelo," how her and family travel between Mexico and the United States.

THE LIFE OF BENJAMIN BANNEKER,

by Jasmine Tripp, 9th grade

Benjamin Banneker worked to be the first African American to make his own Almanac.

He first lived in Maryland along the Patapsco River where he was free. He was not a slave and was able to do whatever he wanted to do. His mom was free, and his father was a former slave but gained his freedom. His parents were able to own their tobacco farm.

When Benjamin grew old enough he took over the tobacco farm. He worked really hard. He worked long hours to make sure his farm was healthy. After every harvest he took bundles of tobacco to sell in town. He didn't want to work on the tobacco fields all his life, he wanted to learn astronomy.

Benjamin taught himself astronomy at nighttime while everyone else slept. After a while he was determined to publish an almanac. In 1789 he spent close to a year observing the sky. He charted the stars and the moon. He needed to find a publisher quickly so he can publish his almanac for 1791. After being rejected a couple of times because no one believed in him, in late 1790 James Pemberton tried to help him but it did not work. They rallied for support, but he had to make a new set of calculations for the next year. In the year 1791, store owners could buy his almanac. In the year 1792 it sold right away. He published his almanac every year until 1797. He did not live to see slaves be free.

THURGOOD MARSHALL, by Cortez Young, 6th grade

Thurgood Marshall was a great man. When he was a child he had to go to court with his dad and listen to a case. Then when they got home they discussed the case like, what was the case about. Also he had to read newspaper articles. When he was done his dad asked him questions about every single article.

Now I am about to get into segregation. Segregation was a big problem to Thurgood. It was a big problem because the black schools were poor and the white schools had better opportunities of getting an education. Also the movie theaters for blacks cost more than the movie theaters for whites. Also public transportation was segregated between blacks and whites.

Thurgood Marshall at 17 found a college that accepted blacks. The name of the college was Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. While he was there he met a girl and they got married. Then he went to law school. While he was there he met a teacher who helped the students understand the law was a tool, was a way that they could get their rights. Also Thurgood and Charles Hamilton Houston fought for desegregation.

When Thurgood Marshall became a lawyer he argued the case of Brown vs. Board of Education at the Supreme Court, and Thurgood won the case so all schools in the U.S.A. had to be integrated. In 1967 he was appointed to the Supreme Court. He was the first black to be a Supreme Court Judge. He retired in 1991 and died in 1993. His memory stays in all schools for desegregation and for all Americans.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, by Ambar Arvidez, 7th grade
Hillary Clinton was born October 26, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois. She graduated from Yale Law School in 1973. In 1979 she was the first female partner at Rose law firm. She was the First Lady of Arkansas from 1979 to 1981. She was active in organizations with the welfare of children.

She tried to create a health care plan and it was approved by the U.S. Congress in 1994. In 1997 she helped establish the State Children's Health Insurance and Adoption and Safe Families Act. She married Bill Clinton and was the First Lady from 1993-2001.

Being the First Lady to Bill Clinton, she helped with many different things, like being a successful lawyer. Lastly, she created a lot of acts to help people.

In her life she helped a lot of people. It was her main goal to make life easier for others.

BETTY ZANE, by Jasmine Lindsey, 2nd grade

Betty Zane is an American. The story was a long time ago. Betty was a girl. She lived with her father first and then she lived with her uncle. Betty did not have a mother. Betty went to get some gunpowder for her uncle. The British soldiers fired at Betty and Betty made it to the fort in time.

TITO GAONA, by Cordell Young, 4th grade

Tito Gaona is a daring man because he has attempted to do four somersaults on the trapeze. He started when he was a boy. Now that he is grown he learned how to master the three somersaults with the help of his family.

MOTHER TERESA, by Frehiwet Negassi, 9th grade

Mother Teresa (Agnes) was born on August 26, 1910, in Skopje, which is now the capital of the Republic of Macedonia. She was the youngest of the children of a family from Shkuder, Albania, born to Nikola and Dranfile Gojaxhiu. Nikola was involved in Albanian politics. In 1919, after a political meeting he fell ill and died when Agnes was about eight years old. After her father's death, her mother

raised her as a Roman Catholic. By the age 12 Agnes was convinced that she should commit herself to a religious life. She left home at age 18 to join the Sisters of Loreto as a missionary. She never again saw her mother or sister.

Agnes initially went to the Loreto Abbey in Bathfarnham, Ireland to learn English, the language the sisters of Loreto used to teach school children in India. She arrived in India in 1929, and began her novitiate in Darjeeling, near the Himalayan mountains. She took her first religious vows as a nun on May 24, 1931. At that time she chose the name Teresa after Thérèse de Lisieux, the patron saint of missionaries. She took her solemn vows on May 14, 1937, while serving as a teacher at the Loreto convent school in eastern Calcutta.

By the 1970's she had become internationally famed as a humanitarian and advocate for the poor and helpless, due in part to a documentary and book, *Something Beautiful for God* by Malcolm Muggeridge. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her humanitarian work. Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity continued to expand, and at the time of her death it was 610 missions in 123 countries, including hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis, soup kitchens, children's and family counseling programs, orphanages, and schools. Mother Teresa died in September 5, 1997, at the age of 87 at Calcutta, India. Following her death she was beatified by Pope John Paul II and given the title Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.

BESSIE COLEMAN: BIOGRAPHY, by Desiree McGregor, 7th grade

Bessie was a brave African American woman. She was interested in flying. She was the first Black woman to ever fly an airplane. She wanted to finish college but she had no money, so she had to move. She lived with her brother when she was older because she did not have enough money for school. When Bessie was younger she would always read to her family and they would enjoy it. She went to France to know how to fly. Bessie was flying and fell down in the plane and broke several ribs and a leg. She would visit school and talk to the kids. She did things like working at the hair cut shop and did nails.

Coleman did an air show and wasn't worried that something was wrong with the engine. The plane crashed, and Bessie was not wearing a parachute. Bessie Coleman died in 1926 after what had happened to her.

She was the first Black female pilot. She was buried in Lincoln Cemetery in Chicago.

She made people that she worked with feel welcomed.

BARACK OBAMA, by Sam Murphy, 7th grade

A man from Hawaii named Barack Obama is charming America. He lived in Hawaii, New York and Chicago. When he was six his dad left for college and his grandparents raised him. He went to Harvard Law School, taught at the University of Chicago and he was elected to the U.S. Senate.

There are many exciting facts about Barack Obama, such as the fact that his wife encouraged him to quit smoking. Also, did you know that he enjoys playing basketball and poker? Barack Obama won a Grammy for Best Spoken Word for the CD version of his autobiography “Dreams from My Father” and he lives in Hyde Park. Barack Obama is beating Hillary Clinton in the 2008 election. If Barack Obama wins the election he will be the first African American President. Famous people are supporting him. In the words of Barack Obama, “In the unlikely story that is America, there has never been anything false about hope.”

MAYA ANGELOU, By Hirut Negassi, 7th grade

Maya Angelou was born on April 4, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri. When she was born, her name was Marguerite Johnson. She grew up in St. Louis and Stamps, Arkansas.

Maya Angelou is an author. She wrote many books. She wrote about lots of things that happened in her life. Maya wrote poems, about her community and lots about her family. When Maya was a child she lived with her mother sometimes and with her grandmother the rest of the time. When she was eight, her mother’s boyfriend badly hurt her. The man who hurt Maya was later killed by her uncles.

Maya Angelou has received a lot of honors in her life. President Bill Clinton asked Maya to write a poem that she could read out loud after his speech. Maya Angelou is still alive.

RICHARD WRIGHT, by Andrew Tripp, 11th grade

Richard Wright was one of America’s greatest black writers. Richard Wright was born on a plantation near Natchez, Mississippi, on September 4, 1908. He also attended a local public school for a few years. In 1927 he moved to Chicago, where he became a post office clerk. April 1931 he published his first major story, “Superstition,” in Abbot’s Monthly. In 1954 he published a novel, named “Savage Holiday.” In 1947, he traveled throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. He was best known for writing novels, and autobiographies. “Native Son,” was one of the novels and one of his autobiographies was,

“Black Boy.” He briefly stayed in an orphanage. His mother’s name is Ella Wilson, and she was a well-known school educated teacher.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, by Oscar Bustamante, 5th grade
Christopher Columbus had three ships, named Niña, Pinta, Santa María. The king and queen gave him money. Christopher Columbus took the ships out on the morning of August 3, 1492. The sailors thought that the ocean was flat. The sailors saw land on October 12, 1492.

FREDERICK L. OLMSTED, by Elija Wood, 3rd grade
Frederick made parks. He lived a long time ago. There was little cities. People in cities needed parks so Frederick made parks. They needed them to play games. Frederick made beautiful parks. Frederick was working in a store for a long time. Frederick got his own farm. Frederick went to Europe. He was planning a park, then made it. That is about Frederick Olmsted.

CESAR CHAVEZ, by Alex Soto, 7th grade
Cesar Chavez was born on March 31, 1927 in Yuma, Arizona, U.S. He fought for the rights for the farmers and was a Mexican American. He started working for Latino Civil Rights Group. Chavez organized strikes for the grape pickers. He asked people to boycott grapes. The grape pickers wanted more money. He also wanted to help lettuce growers. He also organized a boycott to protest the use of toxic pesticides on grapes. He had a college named after him. It’s called Collegio Cesar Chavez. The college closed in 1983. He died on April 23, 1993 of natural causes in a rental apartment in San Luis, Arizona. Cesar Chavez did a lot for the farmers and other people. His birthday is a holiday in California. People named many places after his name. He has a park named after him and a bowling alley. There are also streets named after him and a library named after him. His face was on a stamp in 2003. In Santa Fe, New Mexico and Madison, Wisconsin there are elementary schools named after him in his honor. There is a highway named Cesar E. Chavez Blvd. Cesar Chavez is an important Mexican person for all people from Mexico.

FAITH RINGGOLD, by Asia Johnson, 6th grade
Faith Ringgold was a famous African American who loved to express her heritage. She expressed her heritage by making quilts with meanings. Most of her inspiration came from her mother and her childhood.

Ringgold taught at Bank Street College in New York City. One of her students questioned her. They said, "Why shouldn't we use beads and fabric?" Ringgold thought why not use fabric and beads, and she decided to carry on the family tradition of fabric and beads.

Most of all Ringgold's art pieces are of famous black sayings. Most of her art work is very intricate. One of her pieces is called "Groovin' High," which was made in 1986. "Groovin' High" shows jubilant movement. Dancers shift in polyrhythms around you at the same time.

This was one of the many quilts Faith Ringgold has created. By experimenting with fabric, beads, sculpture, and quilts, Faith Ringgold created a new form. Today she is a famous African American artist.