



Ohghay Kherzai's presentation to the National Commission on Adult Literacy

August 20, 2007

Good afternoon,

My name is Ohghay Kherzai. I am so honored and proud to be standing here in front of you today and sharing some of my memorable experiences from ESL program At CLC, IL that had changed my life and formed my career pathway.

But first, I am going to tell you very briefly about my background. I am a native of Afghanistan and very proud of all the true heritage of Afghanistan. As many of you may already know that Afghanistan, once a beautiful and tranquil country has been torn apart by wars after wars.

I and as many other Afghans have had experienced all the misery of those hellish wars and distractions that Afghan society went through in almost past thirty years, specially being a woman we have gone through worst of it.

Prior to coming to America my family and I was forced to leave my beloved country and become refugee in a neighboring country, Pakistan.

Living as a refugee in Pakistan, was as miserable as you can imagine. There was no hope of normalcy, no hope of any kind of future and certainly no hope of attending college and completing my education. There life was just pure heartache and daily struggle to stay alive.

Even now, when I hear and see the images of the tearful eyes of many orphans and heartbreaking situation of millions upon millions of refugees from Darfur, Rwanda, Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan and many other places remind me of the images that have haunted my soul and will for the rest of my life, because I have experienced it first hand I will never forget that.

But as a 17th century English philosopher Bertrand Russell said "Extreme hopes are born from extreme misery". My hopes become realities once I come to the USA the land of opportunity and started The ESL program at College of Lake County, IL.

At CLC I literally started from ABC, and with the help of fantastic and dedicated teachers and staff members such as Suzanne Leibman and Vicki Eiden and many others I was able to communicate and understand English within very short time. They not only helped me with the English language but they became true mentors for introducing me to American Culture and the education system that I am truly grateful for that.

After completing the ESL program I received a full scholarship by entering an essay in a contest that was open to all collage students, and my essay was selected as a winner.

At this time I have completed two associate degrees: one in science and other in liberal Arts with GPA of 3.9, and have been in dean's list since completing the ESL program.

I still dream of becoming a Doctor, I see a real possibility of my dream coming true. I do not see the world through a pin hole of a Borqa any more, I see a panoramic view of a bright future and for that I thank CLC and its fantastic program: ESL.