



Focus on French Speakers



Frantzize Prince

“Far too often we ignore the small things that can make a change in somebody’s life. For example, if you see physically disabled persons, you can open the door for them or allow them to be first in line. I remember after the earthquake, in January 2010, in my country, Haiti, almost all my classmates lost parts of their body. In the beginning it was very difficult for them to accept their handicap. Because of that, I felt I had to spend all my time with them, letting them know that missing a part of your body doesn’t mean that life has come to an end. One of my classmates, Sandra Pierre, lost both her legs. That was a very difficult situation for a 19-year old so I kept telling her that it was going to be alright. I always tried to make her laugh telling her that the most important thing was that she was alive, and that as long as there is life, there is hope. I tried to help her regain her confidence, and I showed her that I still had the same love for her. Even smiling at someone can really brighten their day.”

This is the second paragraph of first place winner Franzcize Prince’s essay. Franzcize, from Haiti, is here at JSRCC on an international visa through the Hincbe scholar program. Upon completion of her studies in the U.S., Franzcize hopes to return to her country as a nurse.

Second annual VATESOL writing contest

This year marked the second year of the VATESOL writing contest for English language learners at institutions of higher learning across the state of Virginia. Last year, JSRCC’s My Chi Pham won 3rd place for her essay “A Bowl of Pho.” The theme of this year’s contest was *Inclusivity and Advocacy*. We were so proud to learn that the first and second place winners this year were from one of our advanced writing classes. We are sharing excerpts from their winning essays as well as a little information about their respective countries, Haiti and Burundi.

Exploring Haiti



Haiti Flag

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, is located in the West Indies, sharing the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. Creole and French are the official languages. As we know, the country was dealt a catastrophic blow in January 2010 when a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck 10 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince, the country's capital. It was the region's worst earthquake in 200 years, and adding to the immediate relief challenges, the earthquake was followed by an outbreak of cholera. International aid poured in, and the scope of the damage caused by the quake highlighted the urgent need to improve Haiti's crumbling infrastructure and lift it out of poverty.

Haiti Map



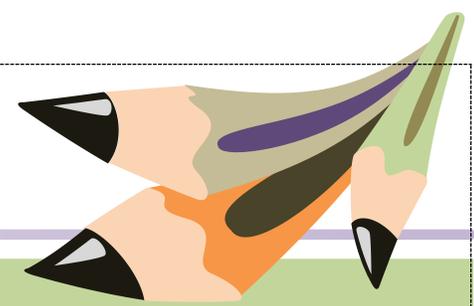
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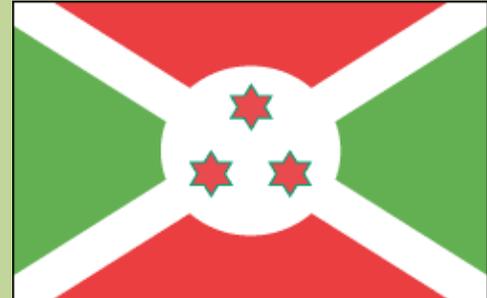
Carine Bucibaruta

“In spite of all information and education about HIV and AIDS, people who are affected by these diseases are still socially discriminated. The worst thing is that discrimination is mostly done in countries which claim to respect human rights. HIV is not transmitted by shaking hands, by talking with the infected person, or by working in the same area. Therefore, instead of isolating infected people, we should support them emotionally. They need to remain integrated in the community, feel valued and supported in spite of living with a disease they know they will never recover from because it has no cure. When the infections become strong and the treatments fail, they may die, but they shouldn't feel this is a punishment for something they did wrong. This is possible only if, when they stop believing that life has meaning any more, we surround them by love. We should be compassionate and caring. They need to experience the beauty of life and the joy of being valued. When their time comes, they will be radiant with peace because they will not be alone on their last path and will leave us feeling loved. It is this support that they lack, this understanding of life as always worth living. We are totally ignorant of what is happening in the soul of the sick when left alone at the approach of death. Their feelings will never appear under microscope and there is no treatment for their hopelessness other than the support, the understanding, and the caring heart of the people around them. Let's help them want to live their lives as a long as possible. Let's stop seeing them as criminals or a threat to society. If we cannot heal their anguished bodies, we can at least heal their disconsolate souls.”

This is the concluding paragraph of the 2nd place winner, Carine Bucibaruta. Carine is from Burundi. She is considering a major in computer science.



BURUNDI



Burundi Flag

Burundi is a landlocked country in the Great Lakes region of Eastern Africa bordered by Rwanda to the north, Tanzania to the east and south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west. The official languages of Burundi are Kirundi and French; Swahili is also spoken. The original inhabitants of Burundi were the Twa, a Pygmy people who now make up only 1% of the population. Today the population is divided between the Hutu (approximately 85%) and the Tutsi (approximately 14%). While the Hutu and Tutsi are considered to be two separate ethnic groups, they speak the same language, have a history of intermarriage, and share many cultural characteristics. UN peacekeepers have been present since 2004 as Tutsi, Hutu, other conflicting ethnic groups, associated political rebels, armed gangs, and various government forces continue fighting in the Great Lakes region, crossing into the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda in an effort to gain control over populated and natural resource areas.



Burundi Map

Information on Haiti and Burundi was taken from Wikipedia and infoplease.com

