1st Place: Tribute to my mother
Eddie Kabore
(Burkina Faso)

“No man is poor who has a Godly mom” Abraham Lincoln Said. By this quote, Abraham Lincoln tried to show the power of a mother. And for me, my mother was a pillar in my life. I always do everything in my life to make her proud of me. All mothers in this world do everything for their children. So, this text is an homage to all women or parents who take care of their children. By this words, I just want to share how my relationship with my mother has changed since I was a child to now.

One day my childhood, I came back from school and I saw my mother cooking. She was cooking, cleaning the house, and teaching mathematics to my brother. On this day, I asked myself how she did all of these thing simultaneously. I told myself she has superpowers. When I hide something, she automatically knew that something was wrong, and she found out what happened. She always knew when I lied. This persuaded me that she has superpowers. When I brought bad grades from school, she yelled at me. I didn’t like that, but I was worried more about what she put in my lunch than my grades. I was an average student until I reached high school. Something happened and definitely change my life.

My older brother who was in the US failed at one of his exam. At the same time, my sister called to say she was pregnant. For the first time of my life, I saw my mother cry. But, did that mean she didn’t have superpowers? She didn’t notice when I started sneaking out at night either. There were many little things like this that made me confused. But, maybe she did notice, maybe she knows everything… maybe that is what makes her strong. Whatever, the fact is that this day I saw my mother sit and cry. Two weeks later, my brother came back from the US without any diploma. He went for studies, but he did nothing and my 18 year old sister was pregnant. My mom changed completely and let me do what I wanted. It was certainly awesome to feel free, but something was telling me I did bad things. I began to realize that maybe I am the problem. So, I started working hard and began to think back on what my mom had always tried to teach me about being an adult. Three years later, I graduate from high school and prepare to go study at the US. The day before I left, she told me: whatever you will do there, make sure to represent our family, and whatever will happen, I believe in you. She has let me go despite my big brother failed few years ago, and despite my sister got pregnant. I didn’t realize what was going on before she told me that. Her words made me think about what she does for us. While I was travelling I was thinking about something: what have we done for her? She provided everything we wanted and all we did was make her cry.

I arrived to Tallahassee, and I started to go to school. I made all I can to make her proud of me. All I wanted was to tell her was, “I got a great score to the TOEFL… I graduated mom.” But one day, my sister came to visit me to see me and pretended to help me to set up my apartment. The day after she arrived, I came back to school and she told me that she has to tell me something. I sit to listen and she said “our mom has gone”. I knew what she meant but I didn’t want to accept that. I took my jacket and went out. I was walking and crying, I didn’t know what I was doing. I crossed the road without watching and I heard a truck honk. I thought it was the end. I would join my mom and that was it. But at the same time, my alarm rang and I woke up. I went and asked my sister, “Do you have news about our mom?” She said, “She is fine, we talked yesterday.” I was so happy knowing that my mom was alive so that I could realize my goal: to make her proud of me.

I just want to end by another quote of Abraham Lincoln who said, “All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.”

Spring 2016
Volume 2, Issue 1
Sometimes, we do not have the decision to choose who we are, or how our personalities are shaped. Our fates are the only thing that draws our life paths, whether we accept it or not. The circumstances that we have experienced in our daily lives play a great role in forming the personalities which everyone has today. Nobody knows when or where he or she will encounter his or her unexpected destiny.

On one of the Fridays, as we were used to having our lunch in one of the seafood restaurants, my father told us which one we should go to. My husband and I were the first people who arrived at the restaurant; we parked in front of the main door of the restaurant waiting for the rest of my family. At that time, I wondered why they had not arrived yet while they were ahead of us according to the last call we had. We waited for more than half an hour, but nobody showed up. After waiting around forty minutes, my elder brother arrived alone in his car. We stared at each other suspiciously. After that, we got out from our cars; then I asked him “Has any of them answered your calls?” as I was sure that he had already tried to contact them, because I could read that from his face. Unfortunately, he replied by saying “No”, so we decided to move. The three of us were wondering without a clear plan; my husband was driving while my brother and I kept trying to call them. After dozens of calls, finally somebody picked up my dad’s cellphone “accidentally”. The only thing I heard from that phone call was “we are not able to get the woman out from the vehicle”. At that particular moment, I felt like a bird without wings. I was in the middle of a huge storm; countless thoughts came into my mind. The first thing that came to my mind is the accident of my classmate’s family, which occurred on the same week, when she lost her mother and only brother. Once I envisioned my life without them, I could not stay empty handed and do nothing; I started unconsciously calling all of the emergency numbers, but to no avail.

At that time, that might have seemed forlorn hope; however, I had a great belief that they were alive. Fortunately, receiving a call from a hospital telling us that “they are alive” proved right sense. That call was my rescue boat which picked me out of the middle of the ocean. However, nothing was clear to me except that they were alive. After receiving the hospital’s call, we directly headed to it. When we arrived there, we were scanning the emergency rooms searching for them. Finally, I heard my little sister’s voice asking about my mother. I followed her voice that guided me to her location, where I found her lying down next to my little brother. I heartily hugged both of them before I met one of the emergency doctors and asked her about their conditions. She replied positively telling me that they didn’t have any injuries. After that, I asked her about my mother, father and my other brother. She told me “you can find your father and brother in the men’s emergency room”. Then I asked again, with a frightened voice, “what about my mother.” She said “she is okay. Do not worry! She is on the next bed, but you cannot see her now because the doctors are examining her”. I was trying to hear the doctors’ discussion, but I could not understand anything because there were a lot of medical terms used in their conversation. While waiting for the doctors to finish examining my mother, I went to check on my father and brother. First, I found my 17-year-old brother, who was in a good health except for some lacerations in the skin of his right hand. After checking on him and trying to calm him down since he was very frightened, I asked him if he knew where I could find my father. He said “Have not you seen him yet? What I know is that he was facing me. You may find him on the other side.” I looked on the other side, but I could not find him until I heard his low sighs penetrating through the dull blue curtain. He was semi-unconscious. I did not want to bother him, so I just held his hand without saying a word. Once he felt that I arrived, he started yelling “your mother…. your mother”. Even though I told him that I have not seen her yet, he kept hallucinatorily asking about her.

Afterward, they took my mother to another room; I followed them without thinking. She had been taken to a restricted room, where nobody can enter without getting permission. After waiting around ten minutes, one of the staff came to ask me, if I was related to Zahra (my mom). Then, they finally allowed me to see her. When I first entered the room, I felt like there was a medical conference in session in that room. It was fully covered with the whiteness of their lab coats. I hardly passed through them until I eventually got to my mother. Words cannot really describe what I felt at that particular moment. I powerlessly stood without knowing what to do until she asked me to come closer. She told me that she wants me to take out her watch from her left hand and to take off her earrings as well. When I went to her right side in order to take off the right peer of her earrings, I was about to check on her right hand to take off her ring as well. She precipitously stopped me saying “nothing is there.” After few minutes, I saw my eldest uncle talking with one of the doctors, who gave him some papers to sign. He looked at us by a sorrowful face and then he signed. I could not interpret what he did; as I could not understand that the papers he just signed will fatefuly affect my mother’s life.

Unfortunately, my mom lost her right hand, and my father was severely injured in his spine and neck. They had to be admitted to the hospital and stay there for almost a month. I accompanied my mother while my older brother accompanied my father during their stays at the hospital. During my escort with my mother, I used to sleep on the floor using a sleeping bag. I couldn’t complain because the pain I felt was nothing com-

See DESTINY page 3
Learning from Bad Things  Ayah Alhashim (Saudi Arabia)

Can you imagine if you traveled to study abroad, and then someone comes to insult you just because of your religion! One day, I had that experience, and because of it I really encourage people, who could, to study abroad! That situation gave me goals those I have to achieve them while living in that country. For example, telling people about my religion and the differences between it and my traditions. So, let me tell you about my story and how did it added some aims in my life.

One day, I was in a restaurant with my friend. While we were sitting and talking there, we heard a family talking about us! They said that we are Muslims, so we are terrorists! In that moment, we took a deep breath, and we kept calm. We know it was not their problem. It was misunderstanding and ignorance learning about other people's religion. They just relied on hearing. So, although they did not respect my religion, they motivated me to be more stronger and trying to make new relationships with other people who are in this country. I wanted to tell those who don’t know that there are many differences between religion and traditions. Also, if a Muslim does something wrong or bad, that doesn’t mean all Muslims are the same. Everywhere you could see bad people who follow different religions. They are not supposed to be Muslims. In addition, when I made friends, I would help them, also they would help me such as both of us would talk about his/her country, traditions, and religion, so we would get knowledge about some people's religion!

At the end, almost people heard who insulted them by anything. These people should not stop on what they are. They should consider that insulting is a motivation as I did, and then they should keep going.

Brain Drain in Africa  Sylvie Sanou (Burkina Faso)

We talk about brain drain when some people, who could be students or workers, immigrate to another country in order to work instead of staying in their home country. So this phenomenon has increased these last years, especially in Africa. Indeed, African brain drain is important because it has a lot of bad effects on African continent. In fact, African countries have lost every year an important part of its high skilled labor force. As they are developing countries, they need high skilled workers who will support the development of their countries. Then, by working in other countries, specifically developed countries, they worsen the economic situation of the continent. For instance, the health domain, which has a huge effect on the economic and other domains, is very affected by this phenomenon because the number of physicians or nurses per people has sharply decreased and most of people cannot afford to visit a doctor when they need to.

There are a lot reasons which encourage high skilled workers to leave their country. The bad working conditions, the lack of good careers plan, the low level of the income and the inefficiency of research programs are the mains factors that push high skilled workers to stay abroad.

They said we are Muslims, so we are terrorists. In that moment, we took a deep breath, and we kept calm.

pared to my mother’s. Those days in the hospital have strengthened my relationship with my mother to the greatest limit. After they were discharged from the hospital, I had to temporarily stop my studies at the university in order to take care of both of them at the house. I had to carry out all the duties which my parents used to do.

The bright outcome of that traumatic accident was that I changed a lot of my values. The period I spent with them at the hospital and home has been invaluable to me because it has really polished my personality in a way or another. It taught me how to be responsible for my parents, siblings, and whole family. Moreover, it has increased my humanitarian sense toward others. In brief, it has changed my life’s philosophy.
Islam is a religion that extols tolerance, peace, love of each other, and love of God. However, lately, the western perception of Muslims and Islam has changed. That change is due to many factors. The main cause is extremist groups like ISIS or Al Qaeda which have brought terror in the world. They kill and want to bring confusion within everyone’s mind. For example, 9/11 was a sad and unforgettable day in the US, and since, Americans’ views of Muslims started to change and to become more and more negative. Consequently, Western countries, Americans especially, should understand that Muslims are not to blame for what is happening because they also suffer from that. For example, in Syria, where ISIS was and is still killing a lot of people, the population that is suffering is composed of Muslims. To conclude, I will just suggest that we tolerate each other as brothers from different countries, different cultures, but still brothers, in order also to fight those groups that create terror all around the world.

Saudi Arabia

Amal Yahya

Education is one of the fundamentals that will aid in bringing any nation up from the grassroots. Because of the inevitable role and the importance of education, the government should invest more of its budget on this.

First, when the government is investing in education, they are cultivating a seed that will grow tremendously, and will help in return by growing the economy. The more education the citizens, the higher the possibilities of employment and benefiting for the country as a whole. For example, China is considered one of the top pioneer industrial countries. Why? Because the majority of the people there have degrees in their fields.

Secondly, education will contribute to raising individuals that are capable of adapting to newer techniques for productivity. For instance, there is a reason why scientists are being paid in the billions to build machinery and equipments that have a role in making lives more convenient. This would not have been possible if education was not supported by a superior force.

Last but not least, by supporting education financially, this will encourage and increase the amount of people aching to learn, but who cannot because of financial obstacles.

Vietnam

Ngoc Tran

Vietnam is covered by ocean, and our territory is separated by sea. This geographical distribution affects our climate. Every year, we suffer from storms, thunderstorms, and earthquakes. Many lives and families come apart. Frankly, our economy can’t handle or fix the bad results after these catastrophes. If we received a large humanitarian donation, our government should use it effectively by investing the money in infrastructure, specifically dykes.

Acts of God are something that humans can’t control or avoid, however, we should have plans to reduce the effects. Dykes are a necessary process. I believe that protecting is more important and useful than repairing. Moreover, I truly believe that a great country has a great bottom, not a great top. Our government whose residents and leaders are wise experts about nature, and they understand how terrible the results of acts of God are. If we invest all the money in the bottom of our country, into buildings to have stronger protections, then we won’t spend as much money to repair buildings after storms.

Social Media

Abeer Mobarki (Saudi Arabia)

I decided to write about how social media affects our relationships, and I chose this topic because it is very important to remind us how social media has stolen our time when we spend a long time just to move from one social media site to another. I believe that social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and What’s App affect the real relationship between parents and their children; teachers and students; wives and husbands; any person and their friends; and all men and women in general. We need to take note about how we use social media in the day to know if we use it in a positive way or negative way or as a way to make relationships. In conclusion, social media can be useful or harmful for the people who use it, so that depends on the usage. The idea that I want to explore is how you are the only person who can control your way to use social media. You are responsible, so try to take yourself self by self to make the right plan for using it.
Burkina Faso

Abdourahamane Ado Boukari

Humanitarian donations are helpful for the countries that are really in need of it. However, the money that is given should be invested in a worthy domain in order to decrease the need for more donations, or poverty. I strongly believe that, in the case of my own country, the money should be invested in health.

Health is without a doubt the most important thing in life because without it, nothing can be achieved. Burkina Faso is a poor country, and there are a lot of health issues. The mortality rate is one of the highest in Africa, and so, the world. The infant mortality rate is also very high and all of these issues should be solved first. There are not enough hospitals and doctors for all of the population, and that makes the price of consultations higher.

By investing the money in health, the country guarantees health for everyone, both poor and rich. If there are more doctors and more hospitals, the mortality rate will decrease significantly. Therefore, there will be more treatment for dangerous diseases like malaria, which is the biggest killer in West African countries. Some rural areas, far away from the cities, lack doctors and treatments. Sometimes there is just one doctor for the whole village. And even if he is a good one, he won’t have everything he needs to cure every single patient in the village. There are a lot of epidemic diseases due to the lack of care. Recently, Ebola appeared in Africa, killing a lot of rural people. Resolution should be taken in order to avoid those kind of diseases again.

Health is very important and all poor countries should start by solving health issues first, before trying to develop other sectors like infrastructure, which is not really as important as health.

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**To Be an American** Emad Fallatah (Saudi Arabia)

When we talk about America the first thing that comes to mind is freedom. There are many good things about being an American. One of the good things about being an American is that you can enter many countries without getting a visa. America always helps people who do not have anything to build a new life and get US citizenship. There are many problems in some countries such as wars and their people cannot live comfortably. Most of them leave to other countries, but the best country for them is America.

America welcomes any person no matter about religion, age, race or color. These reasons behind the huge number of immigrants who want to start completely new life in the U.S.

First, Freedom means to do whatever you want to do and no one asks you about that. You must follow the law. In America the people choose their president by vote. The president can be president for 4 years after that, do other vote to let him/her president of the U.S. for other 4 years. That means the maximum length to be president of the United States is 8 years. The possibility of criticism gives opinions about the government. That calls freedom of speech. In many countries criticism the government could lead to prison.

Second, over one million persons were naturalized as U.S. citizen in 2008. Many people entered to America without papers and they could be U.S citizen. There are many ways to be an American. For example, who was born in America can get the American passport easily. The most common way to be U.S. citizen is to get married from American person but it should be real married not just on paper. Join the armed forces at least for 3 years. Many people prefer this path because the migrant can join the armed even without paper. Political asylum helps as well.

Last, the education in the United State of main causes of the current development. Among the adult population of the country, and more than 85 present have completed high school and 27 percent have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher. This illustrates the importance of education for the United States. The United States has 8 universities of the best 10 universities in the world. The best 3 universities in the world are Harvard University, Stanford University and MIT. That means when you be U.S. citizen, you will have a perfect chance to complete your education.

In conclusion, the word that describes America is freedom. America does not force people to do something they do not want. The possibility of a person gets US citizenship. America welcomes the people all over the world. One of the most important success factors is American education. Attempt to take advantage of anyone who can provide economic benefit to the country or scientific research. In short, America is the land for making a new life.
Inventions in Saudi Arabia
Mutaz Bakri

Every country wants to face the world with the good industries. Nowadays most countries prove themselves by revenue and export. China is the biggest country about revenue and export that is making China steer the economic world. I expect we all agree with that. In addition, each country might have special inventions, China is number one of having amazing production, yet Saudi Arabia has been developing its industries. To be in the front with the biggest economy country in the world, you need to create special items, I believe we all need that in the present day. I will examine below the most important inventions in Saudi Arabia.

New weapons, new appliances with high quality and safety tools for babies.

Firstly, making new weapons can change your country to be stronger. In Saudi Arabia, there are new and amazing weapons such as new army aircraft and armored cars. Saudi government has created planes without pilot that is promising step to the bright future in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, they planned Inventing this army aircraft for 2009, when they almost finished to build King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology which is located in the capital city of Saudi Arabia. This place is where they created these planes.

Secondly, creating good appliances with a high quality made the Saudi’s economic much better than few years ago. If you could take a look about Saudi’s economic history, you will realize that Saudi’s economic depended on the oil only, it did not have revenue and export. Saudi Arabia one of the countries which have strong will, it has been working hard to be one of the biggest economic countries. Nowadays, they have created faucets, sinks, toilets and taps these are made in Saudi Arabia. It helps Saudi citizens a lot. For instance, in the past we were buying these tools with a higher prize, but now we could buy it cheaper and easily we do not need to wait the order two weeks or three. Likewise, Saudi government exports these tools to different countries like Kuwait, Qatar, Yemen etc. that developed Saudi economy much better.

Last, but not the least, having safety tools for babies is more comfortable for the mothers. Saudi Arabia has a new tool originally that created by student who was studying at King Saud University. In additional, Saudi government did a good step about this invention, it bought the idea from that student with around $10,000. The first uses to that tool was really impressive, every woman who has a baby looked up for it. That tool I have mentioned above; it might use to protect the baby from drowning. We had in Saudi Arabia a lot of cases similar to this. Because we have traditions each month, we set up a day for picnic. Some of Saudi’s families like to rent land for relaxing this land includes pool and something for entertainment like 8ball and soccer field. How did the idea come? That person who made the tool was relaxing with his family then his brother drowned in the pool and died. That was encouraging and challenging to his brother to save other baby’s life. In additional, if you put that device in the pool when no one in the pool and some babies jump to the pool, you will hear a loud voice as a bell. Now in Saudi Arabia, you could find that device anywhere that may sell safety tools.

Saudi Arabia is one of the old countries if we all agree about that we can easily reach a conclusion that, Saudi Arabia has been working for a bright future to improve industries. Now, it has good weapons to save their soldiers. Moreover, we will keep our money and time by buying tools that is made in Saudi Arabia. Also, every woman would picnic, and they will not be afraid to their children.
Military Fort
Anonymous

Human’s greed is never ending. We can see this clearly through history. No one was satisfied about his position or what he possessed. Therefore, people have fought - and still until now - trying to rape other’s rights, by claiming that they have the privilege to steel what they want. As a result of wars, people want to defend themselves and their countries as well. From very early history to modern times, military fortifications have been a necessity for cities to survive. During Florida’s colonial period (when Florida peninsula was controlled by Spanish) 1565 -1763, they made many military fortifications, which are buildings with special construction methods, in strategic locations to fortify territories.

In the beginning, I have to say that clarifying the construction methods of military fortifications are very important to be mentioned first, in order to help us to understand the purpose for them later. First of all, they were made of logs, boards, and earth. However, these wooden forts couldn’t resist the different kinds of destructions. Whether they were natural like rot, or they may have destroyed easily by enemies. For example, they can burn them. The Fort at St.Markas was constructed of wood and covered with lime to create the appearance of stone. Although, this trick wasn't successful, it was destroyed by pirates. On other hand, the forts that were constructed with coquina blocks, oyster shell lime, and rocks, can be well preserved. The best instance for that is Castillo De San Marcos in St. Augustine. Spaniards and Indians spent more than 20 years building it. This fort successfully withstood many attacks.

Second, it has been proven by history that people try carefully to choose strategic locations for their military fortifications. And this is what made them such important defensive points. Forts in Florida like Pensacola fort, which is located on the bay in the west, where there were many attempts from Indians to capture it. Another example, is the forts at St.Augustine in the north east of Florida. They faced repeated threats. De San Marcos, Fort Mose, and Matanza, which were located in the east of Florida, their functions were to guard Florida from British and French attacks. They make use of the strategic geography by constricting the coast and providing physical protection for military. Actually, all the forts were located by the sea whether in the west or the east of Florida's borders. They expected attacks from the sea by British and French army in the east; and on the other side, they faced Indians. As a result of that, forts have successfully defeated any attempts to capture them.

Third, the military fortifications in Florida had a huge importance in that period. They were designed for defense of lands in warfare. They mainly served the purpose of a watch tower to guard certain roads and lands that might threaten the region. In addition, they did a great job maintaining the borders. These forts could defeat many attacks. They had very strong walls that stopped enemies. Fort Mose, which consisted of a small village with a strong defensive wall and was surround-ed by a moat, was located two miles north of St Augustine. This fort was like a strong shield for that area. Forts during that time were not only related to military issues but also, they considered helping people as an important thing to do. Forts provided food and shelter. In addition to this, they had a big religious role as well. For example, St.Augustine included teachers and missionaries. They recruited volunteers to teach Christianity for children and prisoners.

In conclusion, military fortifications in Florida during Colonial period were remarkable points in history. Many of these forts are still exist today. They are clear evidence that can show us what happened there. Those walls tell us many stories in resistance and how people lived in conflict. In my opinion, I think everyone will pay whatever it takes to live in safe. No matter how hard it is, anything will be easier than to live in war. Those people who spend their lives fighting for their countries and families are true heroes. Their bravery can defeat the evilness of other people.
Hospitality and Islam
Abeer Hashim (Saudi Arabia)

Recently, I have started working on an initial research about hospitality in Islam, specifically as it is related to the Arabic Gulf countries. The purpose of my research is to present the hospitality’s value for Muslims and how much hospitality behavior and tradition reflect their personality, culture, and social relationships with neighbors and relatives. Hospitality has been recommended to Muslims by the Prophet Mohammed to host guests for three nights with food, house, and serving without waiting for any repayment or reward regardless the guests’ religion, color, or where they are from. Abraham’s honored hospitality story in the Quran and the Bible has been an ideal picture of hospitality for Muslims and many Christians because it includes high values of politeness and kindness. The differences between this hospitality in Arab Gulf countries and other countries are the hosting places, arranging appointments, and food receptions. For example, in most of the Gulf countries, women and men sit separately because of their religious and cultural teachings. In conclusion, every part of the world has different way in hospitality, but in general most Muslims in the world share the same ways or traditions. ■