

Hello, my name is Petra Mendez. I come from San Luis Potosi, Mexico. I attended school in my home town through the second grade. My father was a farmer and the whole family was needed to work in the field and take care of the younger children. On a typical day, we would get up around 5:00, and help Mom make breakfast. Then we would start work. My father and mother and my older sisters and my brother went to the fields, and I stayed in the house with my 4 year old sister. I was 9 years old.

I came to the US in 1984. I married in 1985, and had my first daughter in the fall. In 1989, I had my second daughter. When my daughters started school, I was interested in learning English to help them with homework, but I worked and there was never enough time.

After my husband died, I was very depressed. I was in therapy for almost a year. My therapist recommended that I do something good for myself. She suggested learn a new language, exercise, read, write letters, take trips, spend time with my family. So I thought this is a good time to learn English. For many years I was interested in learning English so that I could talk with my son-in-laws and be able to understand conversations at dinner and at the movies. I was trying to find a school but I didn't know where to look. One day I was going to the mall and I saw a poster for Families and Literacy on the bulletin board outside of JC Penney. I tore off the little strip with the phone number, and I called the office. The secretary said come and do the test. I started in Level 1. That was in 2014, and now I am in the transitions class to prepare for the GED.

I applied for citizenship in August of 2016, and I took the test in January of 2017. I passed the reading and writing parts, but not the government and history. The test is very expensive and you only get two chances to pass before you have to

pay again. I studied for 4 months and took the government and history again in June. This time it was easy. I passed and I became a United States citizen in August. My oldest daughter and son-in-law came from Lubbock to help me celebrate. The ceremony was at 9:30 in the morning, then we went out to lunch in San Antonio, and then dinner at Mamacita's. It was one of the happiest days of my life.

My next goal is to pass the GED. After that, I would like to be an assistant teacher in the Taking Off ESL class. I'm so grateful for all of the help from Families and Literacy, and I would like to help new students who don't speak any English.