

Good evening, everyone,

First, a big thank you to Martha for inviting me to speak tonight.

As an immigrant and someone who learned English as a second language, libraries have been more than just buildings with books—they've been a lifeline. My journey started more than 20 years ago when I began bringing my toddler to library Storytimes. Back then, it was less about literacy and more about surviving the early days of parenthood. Over time, the library became a place where my children learned and grew—and where my family and I found a sense of belonging in the community.

Today, my children are all grown up and ready to start their own lives. My daughter recently graduated with a master's degree and has moved into her own home. My son is a senior in college and is set to graduate next May. Watching them achieve their dreams has been incredible.

Now that they're off chasing their dreams, I've decided to turn back to the library and give back to the organization that gave so much to us. Today, I volunteer as a teaching assistant, step in to teach when needed, and help the office keep things running smoothly.

Volunteering here has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. It's not just about literacy—it's about the resilience and strength of the human spirit. Every learner I work with reminds me how transformative education can be. And in helping others grow, I've grown too.

To the Literacy Unlimited community—thank you. From the learners to the volunteers to the staff, you've built something truly special. This isn't just a program; it's a family.

Thank you all for being here and for being part of this journey. Together, we're not just changing lives; we're strengthening our community.

Thank you!