



*Literacy Volunteers of America*

*Essex & Passaic Counties*

www.lvaep.org

90 Broad Street, Bloomfield, NJ 07003 | (973) 566-6200 -- 195 Gregory Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055 | (973) 470-0039

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## **New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning Adult Learner Writing Contest 2017**

### **First Place – Fiction**

#### **Biography:**

Clifford Henry, 58 years old, served in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay. He is currently in the Reserves and recently returned from training cadets in West Point. During a similar call of duty last August, scores of cadets and members of his brigade showed their appreciation by singing “Happy Birthday.” At home, Clifford works as a cook in Houlihan’s, keeps fit by going to the gym, and studies to improve his reading skills.

Reflecting on the process of writing a short story, Clifford says, “Relate what you want to express from your own experience. Put the thoughts in your head before writing them down. Everything should be in order. After you write, walk away and think about what will go next. Have a drink of coffee.”

**Title:** The Little Superman  
**Student Author:** Clifford Henry  
**Tutor:** Joan Scher

The little boy was standing in the shower. He stopped the water from coming on him. He was wearing a superman costume. He had on a red mask, red pants, red boots, a white shirt with a star on it, a red cape and two wrist bands.

He said, “When I grow up I’ll be just like Superman. My friends think I’m really nuts because I want to be like Superman. I read his books. I watch his movies. I want to save people like he did. When my friends got in a fight in school, I helped them. When I was eight, I saved a dog. The dog was hit by a car and I called for help.

My father told me I am a special child. Maybe I should become a doctor and I can save people like Superman did in the movies. I have so many dreams about Superman. That’s why I want to become a Superman hero.”

The little boy asked his father if he could play sports in school.

His father’s response was, “What type of sports do you want to play?”



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“Football, Dad.”

The father said, “Okay, no problem. Make sure you keep up with your grades in school.”

The little boy said, “Thank you, Dad, I will.”

The father said, “When are you going to start playing football?”

“Tomorrow at practice after school.”

The father said, “Be careful. Call me when practice is over.”

“Okay, Dad, the bus is here to pick me up. I’ll call you.”

The little boy got on the bus to go to school. He went to his class and sat down. One of his classmates asked him, “Are you going to practice after school?”

The boy said, “Yes, I’ll see you there.”

They met each other at practice. The little boy practiced with his teammates. He ran with the ball and got hurt very badly when another boy tackled him. He fell to the ground and did not get up.

The coach ran over to him. He asked him, “What hurts?”

The boy said, “My back hurts and my head is spinning. I feel dizzy.”

They took him off the football field on a stretcher to an ambulance. The ambulance worker examined him. He said, “We need to get him to the hospital very quickly.”

The coach said, “What’s the matter with him?”

The ambulance worker said, “I won’t know until we get X-rays. We will get him to the hospital right now. Did anyone call his parents?”

The coach said, “No, I’ll get on it right now.” He was very nervous and scared about the situation. He called the little boy’s father.

The phone was ringing. The father picked up the phone. “Hello.”

“This is Coach Robinson.”

The father said, “How can I help you, sir?”

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“Your son has been hurt. He’s going to be checked into the hospital.”

The father rushed to the hospital to be with his son. He arrived at the emergency room. He talked to someone at the desk.

The lady said, “Can I help you, sir?”

“My son has arrived here.”

The lady said, “He just came in a little while ago. They are taking x-rays right now to see the cause of the problem. I need to get some information on your son.” She handed him a form to fill out.

The father filled out the form and gave it back to the lady. He was sitting there very patient. “How long will it be before they bring him back, ma’am?”

The lady said, “They should be bringing him down now. Do you want a drink of water, sir?”

“Yes, I’d like to have a drink of water, please.”

She gave him a bottle of water.

He said, “Thank you for the bottle of water. Where is the bathroom, please?”

The lady said, “Down the hall and take a left.”

He came back from the bathroom. “How long would it be before they bring him down, ma’am?”

The lady said, “Sir, I told you once before they are running tests on your son. Let me call upstairs and see how long they are going to be. I will have a nurse come to talk to you.”

The nurse came. “They are bringing him down right now, sir.”

“Thank you very much for having patience with me.”

The nurse said, “It’s okay, sir. It just happens all the time when the parents come to the hospital.”

The coach showed up at the hospital. He went into the waiting room where the father was. He said to the father, “What did they say?”

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“They’re still running tests on him upstairs. They should be bringing him downstairs soon.”

The nurse’s assistant brought the little boy into his room. The father started to cry. He said, “Can I go in to see him?”

The nurse said, “Give us a minute before you go in please. He won’t be able to talk to you because of the type of medicine we gave him.”

She came back. “Sir, you can come in to see your son. The medicine we gave him is going to make him very drowsy.”

The father and coach went into the room. The father was standing over his son’s bed. He was crying. He said to the nurse, “Can I talk to the doctor?”

The nurse said, “The doctor is busy right now with another patient. He’ll be in to talk to you in a couple of minutes.”

The father and coach started to pray. The doctor came into the room. He said to the father, “The tests came back saying your son had a concussion and a couple of bruises. He was mentioning a superman hero when he was in the examining room. Do you know about that?”

The father said, “Yes.”

The doctor said, “We are probably going to keep your son a few more hours to run tests on him.”

The father said, “I am going to stay here and be with my son.”

The coach said, “I am sorry about what happened to your son.”

The father said, “Things like this do happen. I used to be a football player.”

The doctor said, “You do not have to stay if you do not want to. We will keep an eye on him and call if there are any changes.” He went out.

When they were in the room, the boy woke up. The father said, “Thank God my son woke up.” He went to get the doctor.

The nurse said, “The doctor is busy with a patient.”



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The father went back to the son's room. The coach said, "What did the doctor say?"

"The nurse said the doctor will be here in a few minutes."

The nurse came into the room. She asked the little boy, "Do you want a drink of water?"  
The little boy said, "Yes, ma'am."

The nurse said to the father, "The doctor will be in to check on your son."

The doctor walked into the room. "How are you doing, little Superman?"

"I feel fine but I want to go home."

The doctor said, "I have to examine you before you can go home to make sure everything is fine."

The father said, "Thank you for everything."

The doctor examined the little boy. "You are going to be fine. You can go home."

The boy said to the doctor, "You gave me the power to get better. You are my Superman hero."