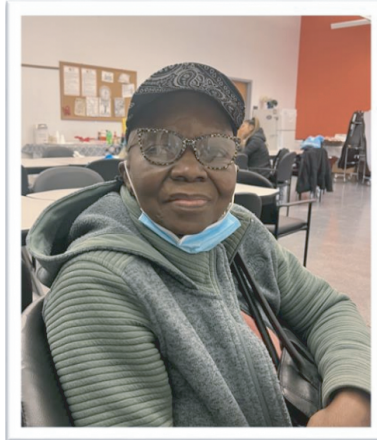


FIRST YEAR WRITING
ENGW 1114 – SEC 03
PROFESSOR EMILY AVERY-MILLER

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS:
LBFE BOSTON
GROVE HALL SENIOR CENTER**

*THIS PROJECT FEATURES WORK BASED ON RELATIONSHIPS AND
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THE OLDER ADULTS OF
GROVE HALL SENIOR CENTER. ALL WORK IS WRITTEN AND MADE
BY STUDENTS IN THIS COURSE*



Cynthia, 83, is originally from Jamaica and moved to Boston for work opportunities and for her children to give them a better life with better opportunities than she had growing up. She raised her five children in the Boston area of Dorchester.

She worked as a nurse assistant in nursing homes throughout different neighborhoods in Boston. Cynthia did this to feed her “sense of purpose to care for others.” She recently was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer, and this impacted her life tremendously. Given this news, her doctor recommended her to visit Grove Hall. She says that this place “is comfortable and the people are caring and together we laugh and play games.” She found a community surrounded with care and joy. Cynthia has only been attending Grove Hall for less than a year but is thankful to “have a place that has a family who do fun activities together.”

Advice from Cynthia

- Incorporate the things you love into your lifestyle, live in the moment even if not happy,
- but find thanks in the moment, don't run through life
- You will learn more when times are hard
 - Don't say “I should have”
 - Not hard times, they are teaching moments
 - Life is beautiful not hard; it is us who make it hard
 - People will hurt you, but forgive them because God forgave you
 - Are we doers or hearers of God's word

At Grove Hall, we have been talking to the older persons recently about their cultural traditions. Cooking is such a special way to connect with the older generation, and being someone who loves to cook and bake I share the passion with many of the people there. This week we discussed their traditional Thanksgiving foods they cook for the holiday. I was discussing how I cooked pumpkin pie, whoopie pies, and appetizers. One woman I talked to kindly shared one of her favorite recipes that she cooks often, not just for Thanksgiving. She cooks this for her children, grandchildren, and siblings as well. The following recipe is one she cooked last week, but also on a weekly basis whenever her kids request her to cook it.

Recipe By: Dreyla

Making: Black Rice

Ingredients:

- Black mushroom-> need to boil it and get the black juice
- Lima beans/black beans/ red beans
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 1 green pepper
- 2-4 cups of rice (depending on how much you want to make)
- Water 2-4 cups (depending on how much rice)
- Tomato paste (to taste) approximately 1 tsp
- ½ cup coconut milk
- 1 hot pepper (up to taste)
- Parsley
- Thyme
- Optional: protein- chicken, turkey, or shrimp

1. Wash rice first
 2. Chop up green pepper and onions and chop up garlic and fry it in pan
 3. Put in the beans
 4. Covered in pan and let sit for a little while
 5. Tomato paste into the bean mix
 6. Add water, 2 cups water to 4 cups rice
 7. 3 and ½ cups water and ½ cup coconut milk, when boiling add rice
 8. And then put seasoning
 9. When boil, add 1 hot pepper on top green pepper, and then parsley and thyme in
 10. When rice is dry, cover it until absorbed and once it smells of green pepper
 11. Serve with chicken or turkey
- *Can add shrimp if you want



Image creds: <https://thecafesucrefarine.com/how-to-cook-black-rice-or-forbidden-rice/>



Chi McCormack

1. As we've spent time together over these meetings, is there a particular period or event in your life that stands out to you as especially significant or memorable?

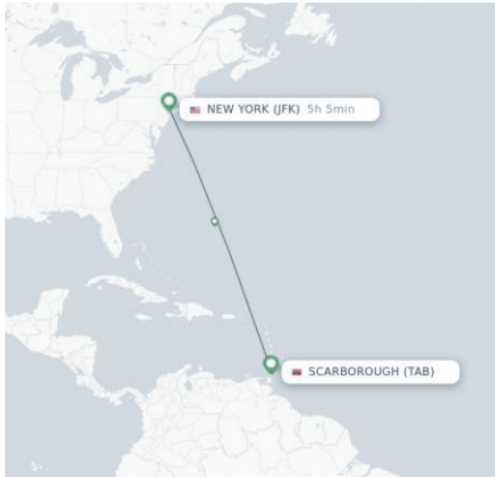
"I grew up in Boston. It was quite a turbulent area (the 60s included a lot of fun). I took a lot of LSD, and got addicted to heroin. I was a nice middle-class kid but went on to become degenerate and homeless. My parents never cut me loose but let me find my own way. This went on for 20 years. Eventually, I went to a detoxifying center and got sober. My entire life changed and turned around. I had always thought that people who worked were too stupid to figure out alternative methods of getting money. But I learned the value of hard work and independence and how it makes you feel good about yourself. I soon tried to help other people. I was on the other side of every argument she ever had. My family was not mean to me, but was rather too kind to me. I became an adult. It was a very interesting experience. I think parents should spend more time talking to kids about getting prestigious jobs, and they don't tell them about the actual value of work and making independent decisions even if they end in mistakes. I got a lot of life skills from independence. Families are like those mobiles where things hang in different. The basis of the mobile is that everything is balanced, and when a thing changes, everything changes. Let things take its course. Don't worry about things so much. Making mistakes is one of the best ways to learn."

2. Can you recall a moment from our interactions that was particularly meaningful or enjoyable for you? What made it special?

"There have been many of them. Talking to you has been a wonderful experience since you are thoughtful and ask questions. Your only goal isn't how I'm going to make a lot of money. It gives me faith for the future. Connections are very important, like the one that we created. We need more intergenerational connections."

3. Given your life experiences, what advice or wisdom would you share with someone younger, perhaps even your younger self?

"Don't be afraid to make mistakes. If you have an idea or dream, try it out. The worst that can happen is that it doesn't work, and then you can come up with another dream. It's not the end of the world."



Whether it's been decades, a few years, or something you have yet to experience, imagine being 18 years old. Imagine growing up surrounded by all of your family and friends. You've finished high school and are ready to step into adulthood. Adulthood is defined as staying with your family and friends on the island you grew up on. You're fine with that idea, however you can't help but think that there is more for you out there. Your gut tells you to go while everyone else tells you to stay. Everyone is staying except for one person. Your partner. Your partner is moving to Boston, Massachusetts, USA to pursue their college education. Your mother would never let you leave the country nevertheless leave to follow love blindly. But you did it anyways. You tell her you're going to move in with your brother who has already established a life for himself in New York City. It's not a lie, you do move with him but your intentions run deeper. You completely alter your life by learning a new language, getting a new job, and adjusting to an entirely different culture. For some, this is not an imaginary scenario but their reality.

For Glenda, an older adult at Grove Hall, this was her story. At age 18, she packed her bags and moved from her home island of Trinidad to New York City to live with her older brother. There, she got a job at a bank and worked hard throughout the week. On Fridays, she came to work with her suitcase packed and as soon as her shift ended, she was out the door and at the bus stop. The bus brought her from New York City, New York to Boston, Massachusetts where her boyfriend stayed. She remained in this routine for many years.

One time, he took the liberty of visiting her in New York. As they journeyed through the entanglement they call the "subway", her and her lover had gotten separated through closing train doors. She watched in horror as he was left standing on the platform, confused and alone. Without the ever so useful creation of the cellphone, she had no way of communicating with him. Quickly, she grabbed a pen and paper (we still do not know where she got these from) and wrote down "WAIT THERE". Being the New Yorker she was, she traped through the multiple subway lines and finally found her way back to him. After that, he never came back to New York.

Despite the horrors, Glenda and her boyfriend stayed together until the end. They got married, started a family together, and lived happily ever after.

By Rosalie Zagabe

The recorded interview features an older adult of Grove Hall who relocated to Boston during her youth from southern Alabama. Recounting her experiences growing up in a predominantly agricultural South, she shared captivating stories about how they spent their time outside of farm work. The narrative primarily centers on the unique toys they enjoyed, specifically two distinct types of bugs—Light Bugs and June Bugs—that served as their toys. Towards the conclusion of the recording, she delves into the types of dolls that were accessible to them during that era. In my view, it's a fascinating story to share.

Interviewee: Gillian Ederle, sophomore Environmental Studies student at Northeastern

*[Snippet from our conversation about volunteer work & community service]
[starts @ approx. min 7 of recording]*

Gemma: Did you have any experience with volunteer work or community service before the class?

Gillian: Yeah, I did... I did a decent amount in high school cause-- I don't even know why, to be honest, just cause a big thing my parents always, like, taught to us was that we always should be-- like my mom always said to us that no matter what stage you're at in life, you should be doing community service. Or just like doing something small to help the community so I kind of just grew up with it. But yeah, I co-founded a club but that was during COVID so we didn't really do anything. And then I worked for an organization in my community called Project Grad so we did parties for graduates the night of graduation.

Gemma: Oh, wow!

Gillian: Yeah, so I helped out with that all four years and then I had some high school requirement stuff, National Honors Society, stuff like that. I didn't really know about any of the volunteer opportunities in Boston, though.

Gemma: Me neither. So then with South End Soccer, is that something that Professor Avery-Miller set up from the beginning or was it something you guys decided together? Was it a preset volunteer organization for the class?

Gillian: Yeah, it was one of the preset options. I've been playing soccer since I was really young so I was drawn to that one.

*[...]
[~min 10:20]*

Gemma: What was your first-- do you remember your first time going there and what it was like?

Gillian: Yeah, I think I remember... I remember it being less coordinated and organized than I thought it would be. Also, I'm the type of person where, like, I have to plan out every step of anything I'm doing, like if I'm going to an event I have to plan out "where am I going," "what time do I have to get there," like "where do I go specifically on the field," so I remember it being kind of chaotic, and like, I don't know, I found the people in charge and they kind of just threw me in and they were like "Okay! You're gonna go do this," no, like, orientation just like, "go! Coach kids!"

Gemma: Was that, like, nerve-wracking at all or did you feel like you were kind of ready for it?

Gillian: It was nerve-wracking.

Gemma: Yeah.

Gillian: Okay, now I think I could probably do a better job of it, but like, that took a good year to get to this stage so like I was definitely kind of freaked out and like... I don't know, I didn't wanna mess up. Like it's kids.

Gemma: Right. That's kind of how I felt the first time at Grove Hall... and it's interesting cause I feel like those kind of experiences in the moment are rough but like looking back at it, it helps you build like, I guess, a background in doing more of that kind of stuff and having it be less and

less uncomfortable each time--

Gillian: Yeah! Yes--

Gemma: Which is like, really nice even though I always prefer to have a plan as well, I'm such a planner.

Gillian: Yeah, me too. No and I honestly use that in my interviews all the time, like "Yeah, I work at South End Soccer and genuinely every day is different and I have to think on the spot and, I don't know, be willing to change plans all of a sudden" so yeah I think it's a really good skill to learn.

Gemma: Exactly, it's a whole new set of skills that just needs to be practiced, I think, in the real world.

[...]

[~min 13:10]

Gemma: What do you think were some of the characteristics of South End Soccer that made you choose to return there?

Gillian: Um, I think the main thing was that it was soccer-focused, again, like, soccer's always been a part of my life and I'm not playing soccer here so I still wanted something that connected me to soccer but in less of a direct way, but yeah... and also it's really fun! The kids are hilarious like on Saturday they just dumped a bunch of pinnies on me and said I got "buried alive" and it's just so random and funny and it's a good hour of just like--

Gemma: --Playing?

Gillian: Yeah! Exactly.

Gemma: That's adorable.

Gillian: Yeah, and also it's an easy commute. I'm in a sorority so I have to get (volunteer) hours as part of our thing so I was like this is a fun and easy way to do that. But it's mainly because I wanted to stick around soccer.

Gemma: That makes sense. So for specifics, I know you said it was different each time but, what are some examples of some things you might spend your time doing there?

Gillian: Ummm I'll just run you through last Saturday: so we got split into different groups and got partnered with other volunteers -- they're usually from APO, which is the community service frat -- and so we got split into stations so I was running a game call Funky Chicken, so I was like running around with pinnies and they had to hit me with a ball, and I was working with kindergartners, too, which is so cute.

Gemma: Tiny.

Gillian: Cause I've worked with eighth grade to three and four year olds and I think kindergartners are my favorites so far. But yeah, so we'll just run around, play games with them, sometimes they'll rotate the groups throughout the different game stations. And then honestly, by the end of it it just falls apart. By the end of it, we're all just throwing things at each other and covering each other in pinnies and.. yeah! That's usually the typical day.

Gemma: That's sweet. How long are your sessions normally?

Gillian: I've been doing an hour. In the spring I was doing an hour and a half to two hours.

By Gemma Weisenfreund (cont.)

Gemma: Wow, well it seems like it fits you and your interests kind of perfectly, I'm happy you found this.

Gillian: It's great.

Gemma: So is this something you would recommend to other people, or maybe something that might only attract a smaller subset of people?

Gillian: I think everyone could do it. I've been arguing with my roommate to try to get her to come and do it and she's like "well I don't know soccer" and like, I think it helps to know soccer and especially like, I enjoy it more because I played soccer and I know how much of an impact my coaches had on me and like, I get it and know the environment, but honestly I think anyone could do it and I recommend doing it. It's so fun to just play soccer with kids, they say the funniest things. We have so many volunteers that don't know how to play soccer but like, working with the younger kids, they don't know how to play soccer either! They don't know what they're doing. It's a good time.

Gemma: That sounds like a really welcoming environment!

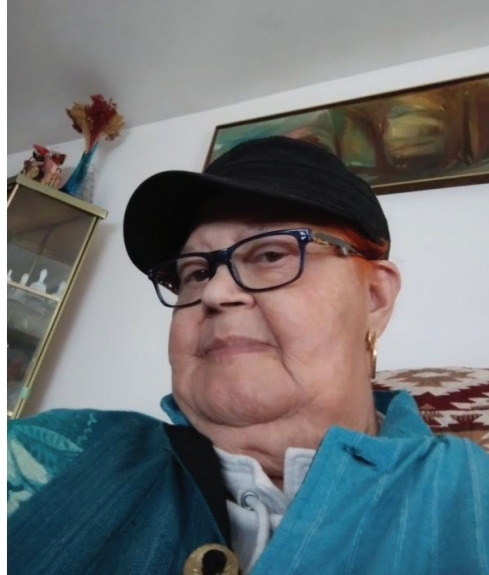
Gillian: Yeah, it's a nice break too.



During the process of Covid 19, Annette could only stay at home, so she decided to practice tailoring and made different bags, which are now shown on the left of the wall after entering Grove Hall Senior Center. She made more than fifty bags to spend her time during those periods.

Except for tailoring bags, Annette also cared for plants, a habit she formed when she was young. Her grandma had a garden with different kinds of plants and flowers, and she saw her grandma take care of those plants, so she also learned about these skills. Whenever she saw some flowers she did not raise, she would buy them and take them home. Now, she has presented more than thirty kinds of plants at her home and feels proud of things. I also asked some questions about how to care for a flower. She told me everything in detail: what kind of flowers would prefer to stay in the warm place and which type of flowers need to be watered frequently; for example, it will be better to plant roses outside instead of putting them at home, helping them to grow more healthy, which surprised me and helped me learn more about flowers.

I had common sense about my feelings about COVID-19 at the beginning of the period. In my memory, my mother was forced to go to work in the first months, and she acted like that old lady, wearing masks, gloves, and alcohol. Moreover, she changed her coat after arriving home to prevent the virus. However, I have just stayed home and taken the online courses because of the policy. At that time, I completed my homework, had classes, and did not want to do to make my boring life colorful. I had never considered raising a hobby to do and connecting this to my daily life. I have tried to do something, like to do some exercises at home, but gave at the end for different kinds of reasons. After hearing her stories, I found that people must have a habit and keep it for a long time so that one day, it will be easy for them to become experts in this area. People can try to raise a habit from what they are interested in and insist on it for more than 21 days, then the thing that are interested in will become a habit, which will change people's life.



Valerie Best

1. Could you introduce yourself more, like where do you come from and how long have you been in Boston?

“I was born in Massachusetts and Malden, Everett, that's mostly where my family was from. I live now in Mattapan. I've only live here. I used to live in Dorchester.

2. Before you get old, have you ever thought about being old? How did you feel at that time, and now how you're feeling about it?

“It's just we're seniors now. And we're more seasoned. We're not old. We're just more seasoned. We have more wisdom now. ”