




# TARGETING LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION, AND APHASIA AWARENESS THROUGH POSTCARDS

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## Disclosures

Fabiane Hirsch Kruse, PhD, CCC-SLP, Postcrossing:  
Targeting language, communication, and aphasia  
awareness through postcards,

- Financial: President/CEO of Friends of Aphasia, Director of the Aphasia Center of Tucson, Owner/Speech-Language Pathologist at Saguaro Center for Speech & Language.
- Non-financial: None

The goal of Postcrossing is to allow anyone to send and receive postcards from all over the world!

The idea is simple: **for each postcard you send, you receive one back** from a random postcrosser from somewhere in the world.

All done through a web platform  
[www.postcrossing.com](http://www.postcrossing.com)

# What is Postcrossing?

## Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

- learned about Postcrossing at ASHA 2016
- was being used by the Chippewa Valley Aphasia Group  
*Postcrossing – Utilization of Postcard Exchange to Support Communication and Social Interaction in an Aphasia Group. ASHA 2016 Poster Presentation (Keyes, Sather, Clark, Hoepner & Knutson). **Note: Meritorious Poster Award Winner, ASHA2016***
- a golden nugget from ASHA that I put into use immediately at the Aphasia Center of Tucson



### **1. Write a postcard**

- The first step is to request an address – you will receive an address of a random member and a Postcard ID (e.g., US-12345).
- Buy a postcard (yes, a real postcard).
- Write a message, the address, and the Postcard ID on the postcard.

### **2. Post it**

- Mail the postcard.
- When your postcard arrives, its recipient will register it using its Postcard ID. This will make you eligible to receive a postcard from some other random Postcrossing member. Where your postcard will come from is a surprise!

### **3. Hurray! You've got mail!**

- One day, you'll check your mailbox and a postcard from someone far away will be waiting for you!

### **4. Register the postcard**

- Now it's your turn to register the postcard using its Postcard ID. That's it!

- Since learning about Postcrossing at ASHA, I have included it as one of the activities each semester in our Writing 200 Group.
- More recently, I have included Postcrossing in 1:1 therapy



- Targets language and communication skills:
  - functional writing
  - functional reading
  - conversation
- Provides an opportunity for international aphasia education and advocacy

## Use of Postcrossing in our Writing 200 Group

- We request recipients during our group sessions.
  - like a lottery!
  - we read the profiles of the recipients (leads to some great conversations)
  - group members choose from the recipients
- Group members write their postcard notes at home.
- We edit the notes as a group during our sessions.
  
- When postcards arrive in our mailbox...
  - we read them in the group
  - we discuss the postcard message, the country of origin, and anything else of interest



## Use of Postcrossing in Individual Therapy

- I recently started working with a young woman who wants to work on writing as part of her individual therapy program.
- She can write at the paragraph level with mild deficits in the following areas:
  - word-finding
  - spelling
  - syntax
- Postcrossing has been a wonderful, functional way to work on writing.
- Plus, she loves receiving postcards from around the world!



# Education & Advocacy

We provide information about aphasia in  
our Postcrossing Profile:

[AphasiaCenterTucson](#)

# AphasiaCenterTucson Profile

We belong to the Aphasia Center of Tucson which is located in the city of Tucson, Arizona, in the U.S.A. We are all stroke survivors and we all have aphasia. **Aphasia means we have problems with speaking, reading, writing, and understanding. It does NOT affect intelligence.** Aphasia comes from a Greek word meaning "speechlessness." Some people at our Aphasia Center have been living with aphasia for a few months while others have been living with it for more than 10 years.

Classes are on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. We have about 30 people right now. We divide into smaller groups of three to six people. We work on reading, writing, and talking. We also have fun groups - Mexican Train Dominoes, Art Group, Gardening Group, and others. We laugh a lot!

We are all members of the Writing Group. We are working on improving our writing skills. A little bit at a time. We write stories, poems, and letters to our Postcrossing friends!

Qatra qatra darya mesha

A river is made drop by drop!

Information about each of the members of the Writing Group:

Scott - I had a stroke almost 8 years ago. My wife and I have lived in Tucson for 14 years now. It's been nice here.

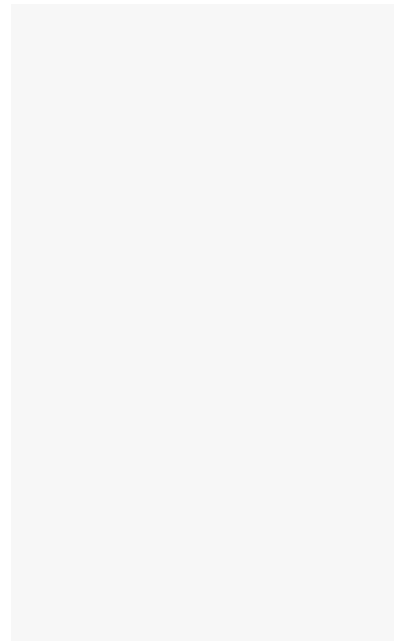
Felisa (Farzana Marie) - I grew up in Chile, USA and Kazakhstan! I have also lived in Afghanistan. I had a massive stroke on 29 August 2015 in Afghanistan. I was only 31 years old. My body is healing. My hobbies are Ultimate Frisbee, cycling, reading, and writing poetry. Thank you!

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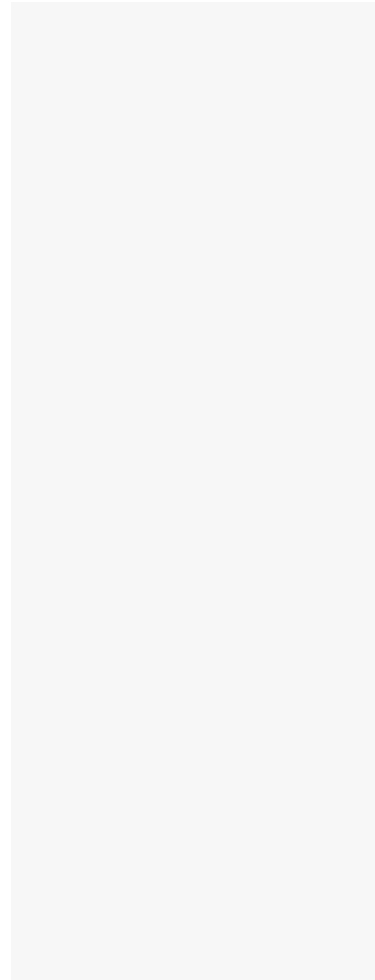
## Some Stats



We have received cards from...



We've sent cards to...



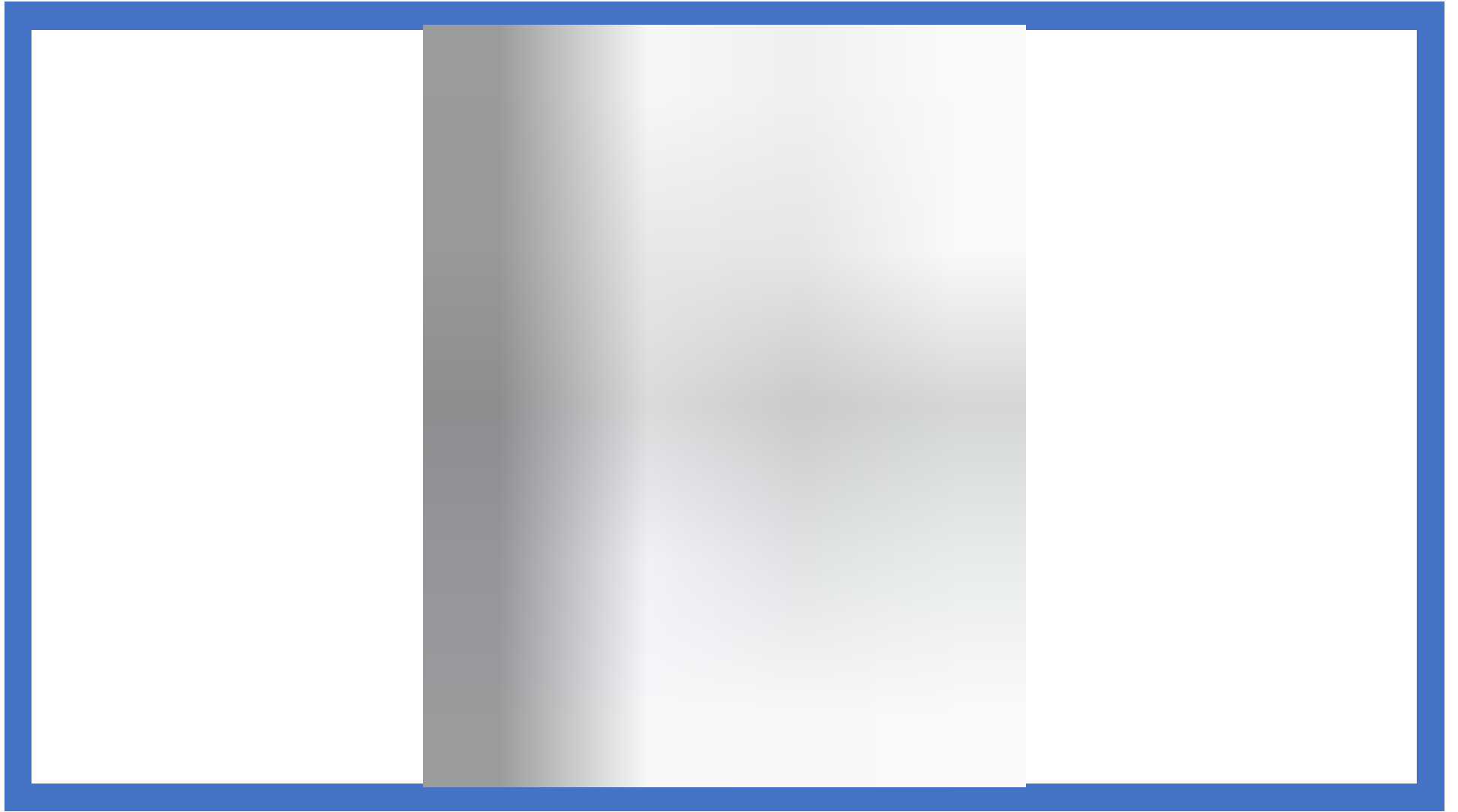
# OUR POSTCARDS

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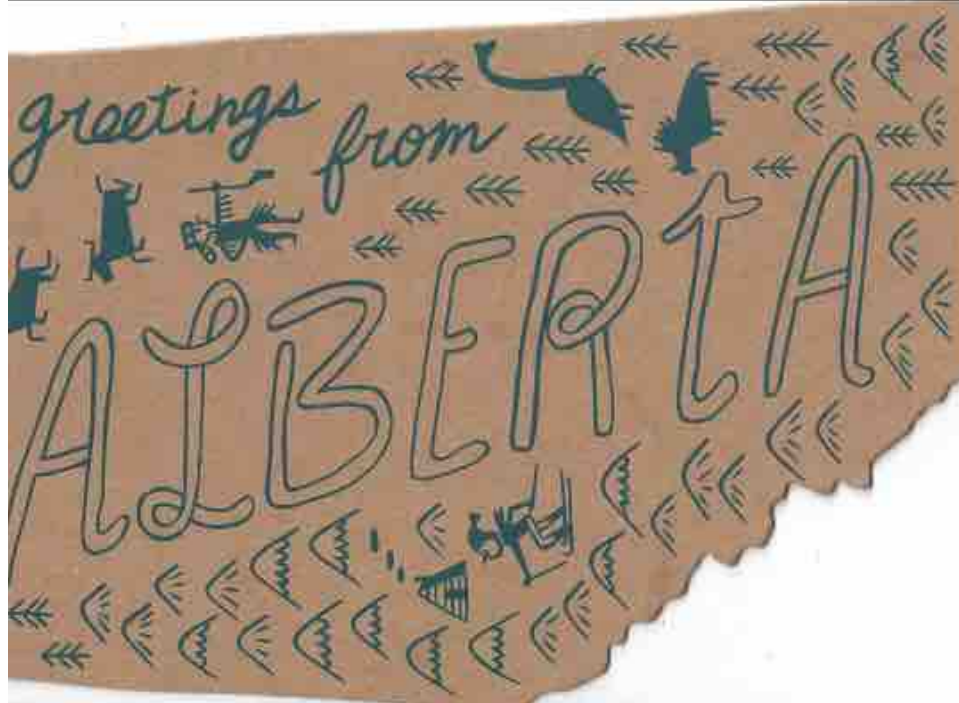
SENT IN RED / RECEIVED IN BLUE

**I WANTED TO BRIEFLY SHARE A FEW  
POSTCARDS WE HAVE RECEIVED...**





greetings from  
**ALBERTA**



Alberta is the Rocky Mountain province of Canada. Its capital is Edmonton, and the largest city is Calgary. Many of its symbols are the wild rose, big horn sheep, and the famous Calgary Stampede.



**Air Mail Par avion**

13-074-038 (02-12)

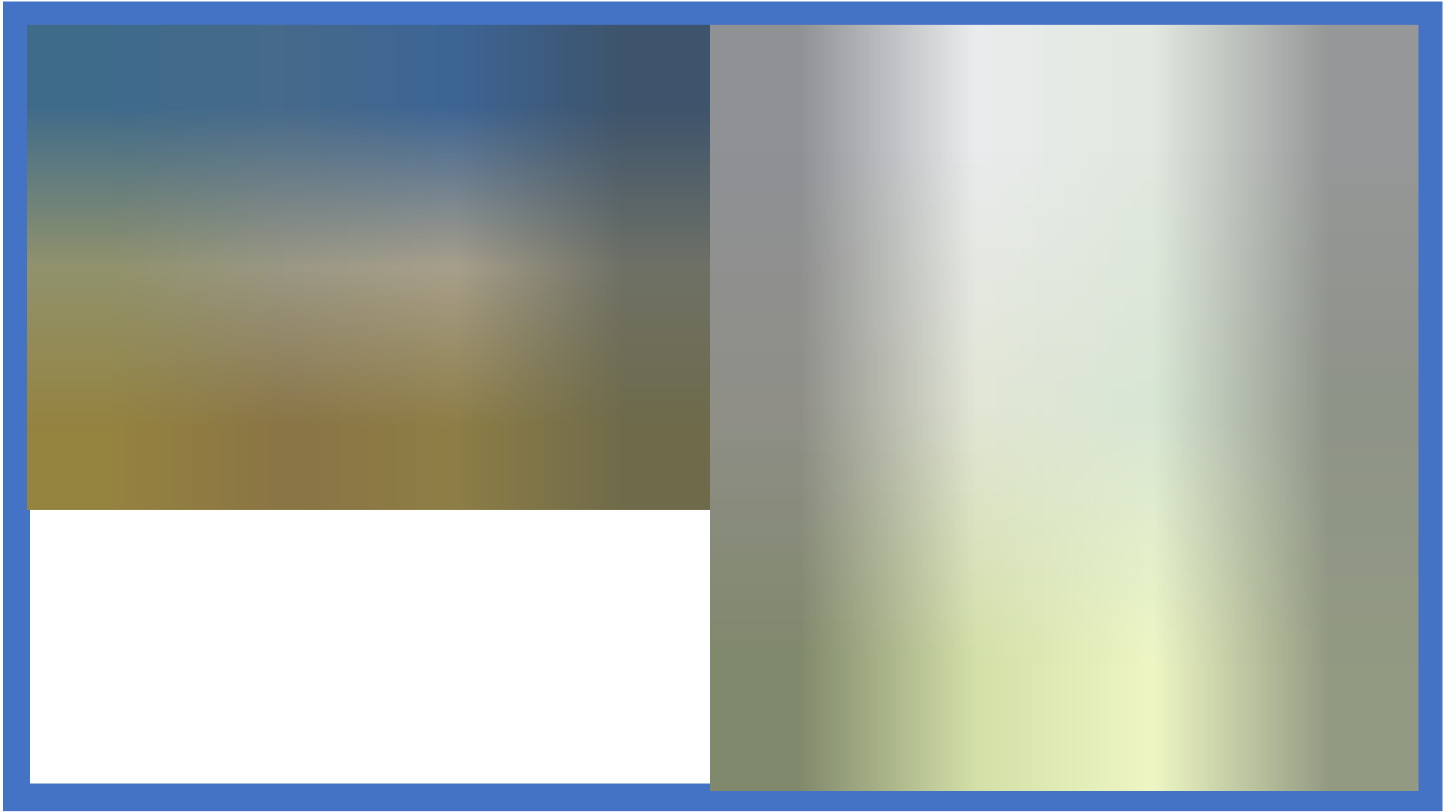
Background free.

Hi folks!  
I'm Noah, I live in Calgary, Alberta. I am fourteen years old and I just entered grade 10. I am really tired today. I hope you all have a good day!  
-Noah

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Printed in China from 100% recycled paper.





Rolf Unger, 2008 / The "Klompjes (Wooden shoes) automaat" a typical Dutch vending machine / © Art Unlimited 2008 / Reproduction prohibited

Zwolle, Holland 6/6. 2017  
Hello from Am. I live in the  
eastern part of Holland.  
I hope you like this Dutch  
post card, wooden shoes in  
vending machine :-)

Am Take  
code

nl-3827474

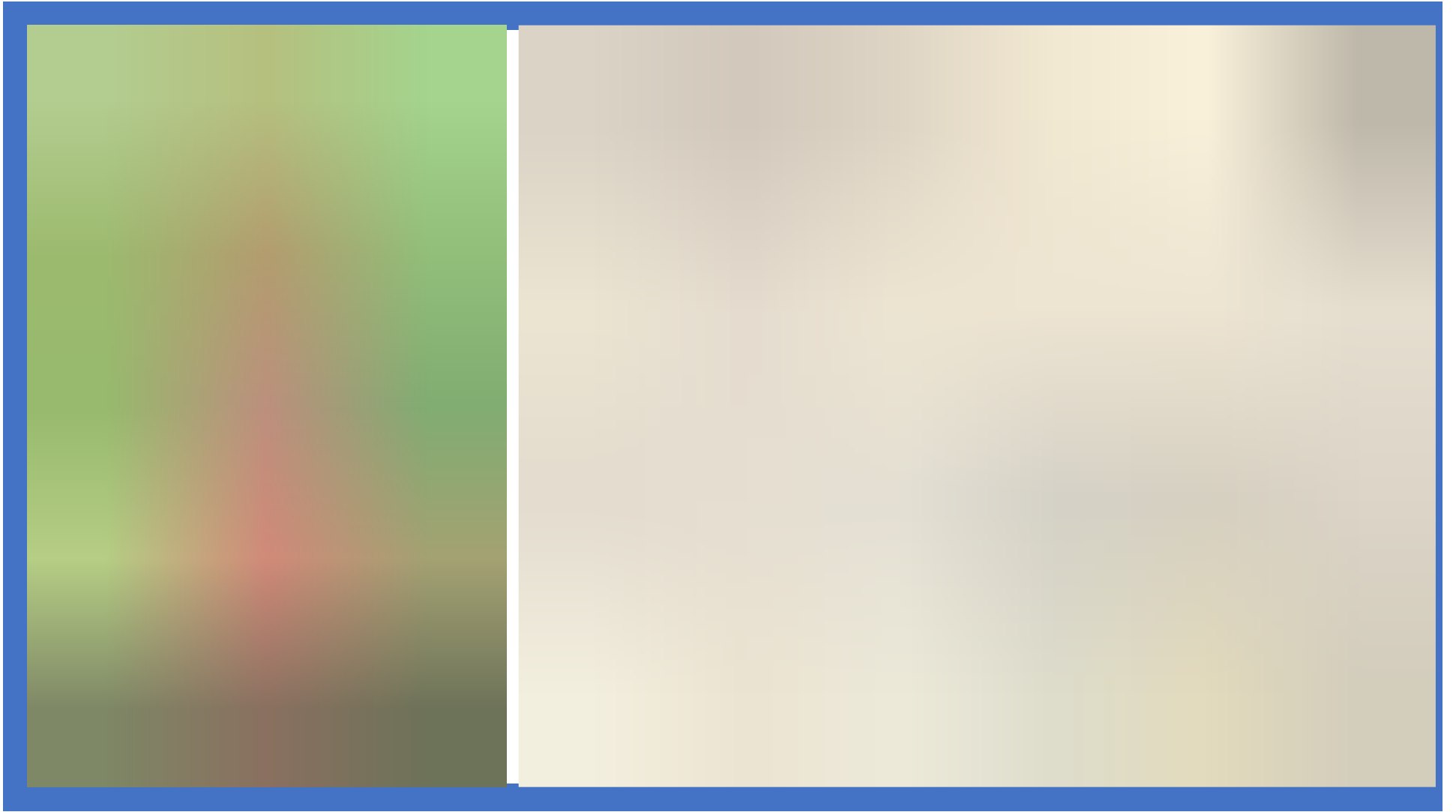
ART UNLIMITED.COM  
POSTBUS 1740 1000 BT AMSTERDAM  
info@artunlimited.com

8 711865 334019

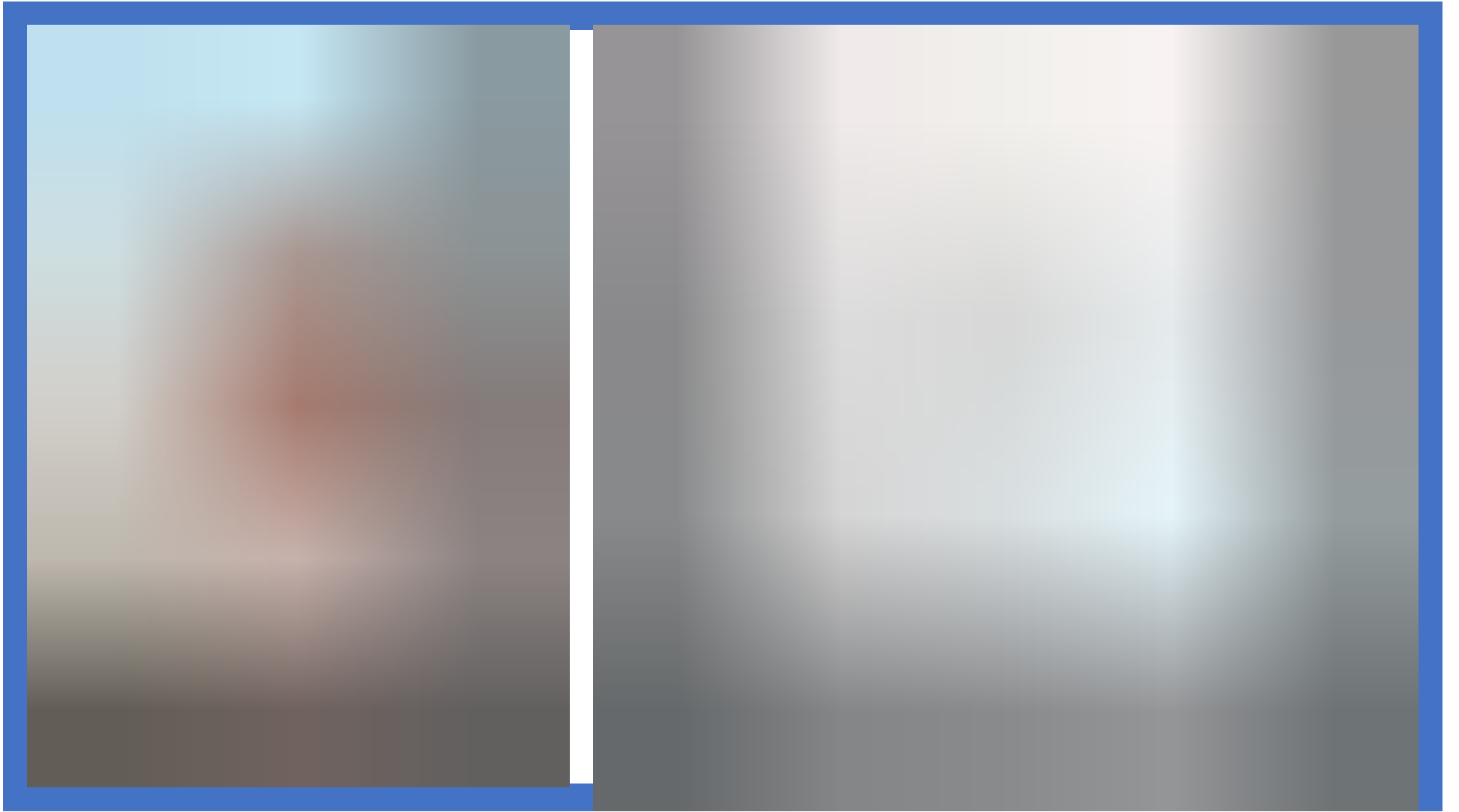
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AZ 85732-2232



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**WHAT DO YOU  
LIKE ABOUT  
POSTCROSSING?**

## What do you like about Postcrossing?

I like to tell people about things that I am grateful for about my life. It keeps my mindset positive! Then when I receive postcards from all around the world, I realize that everyone has a story to tell.

What do you like about Postcrossing?



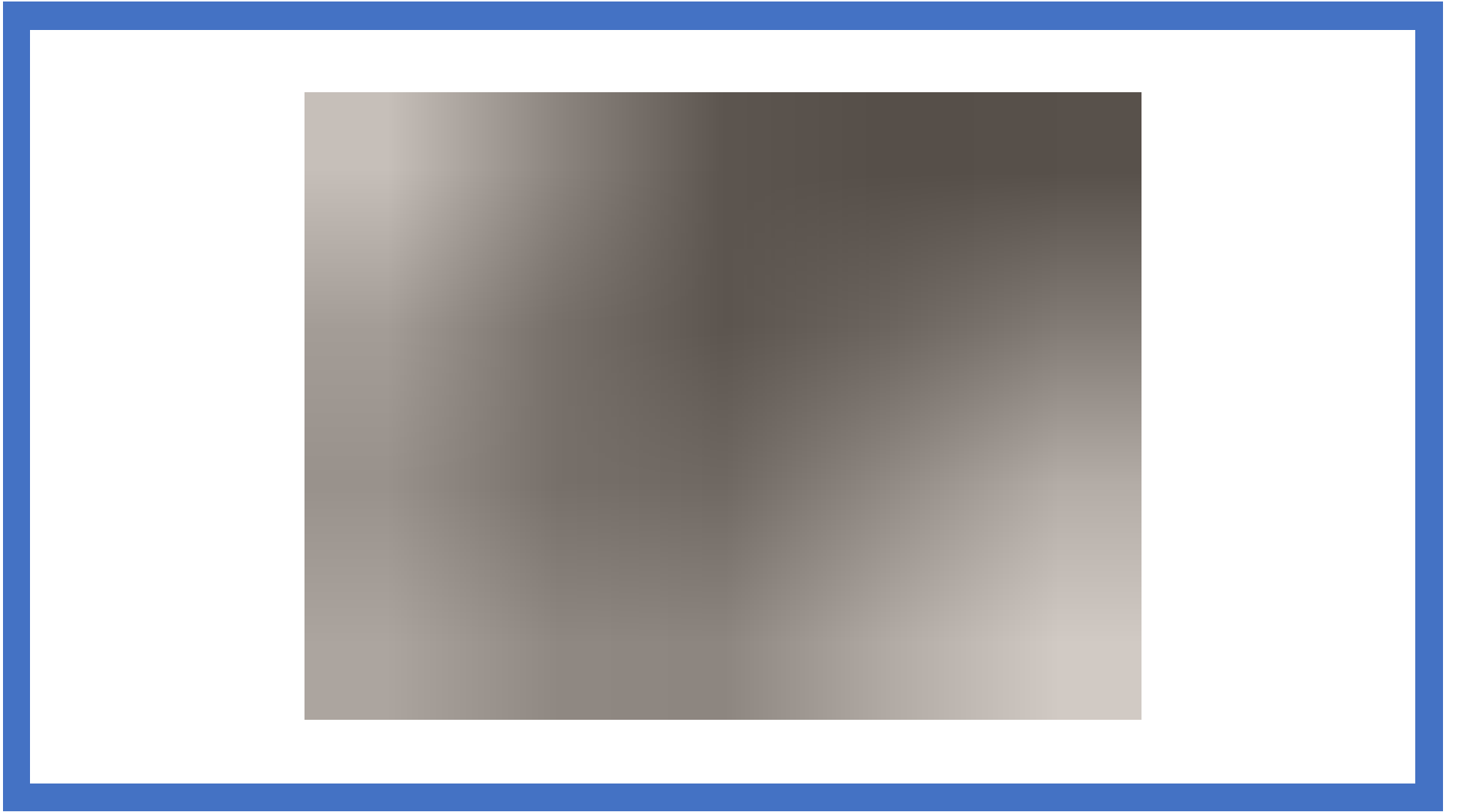
What do you like about Postcrossing?





**OUR 2 YEAR  
POSTCROSSINGVERSARY**

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# Thank you!

Catch me at any time during the conference if you want to know more!