



New Neighbors News



A Newsletter Written By and For Our Students

New Neighbors English Language Learning and Family Literacy Program Volume II, Number 1 December 12, 2014

Starting A Way In A New Country

By Veronica Saenz (Level 7)

Learning English is the important key to freedom for foreign people. Feeling free to go to a shop, to see a medical doctor, to interview for a job, and to meet friends is important for us.

Communication is very important in this world, and even though the social network is growing, I am a person who believes that the best way to get to know people is through a face-to-face conversation.

As immigrants, when we decide to come to this country, we know it is important to

learn English, but sometimes we have compelling necessities: making money to pay bills and to send to our families, taking care of our children, etc. We often feel overwhelmed by our obligations and decide to postpone studying English. Years pass and we become stuck in the same situation.

I have felt stuck, too. I took English classes at NOVA and other centers, but I could not afford that, so I had to leave my studies. *(continued on page 3)*

A Trip to the Hill for Level 7



In honor of Veterans Day on November 7, our resident current events buff and co-teacher of the Level 7 class, Don Schlichtmann, took 11 students, one spouse, and four children to visit the U.S. Capitol, the Supreme Court, and the Library of Congress.

Things to Remember When Learning English

By Joby Dupuis, Level 4 Instructor

- Insert English into your life every single day.
- Try to make learning English as fun and interesting as possible.
- Understand that fluency is not perfection.
- Review your progress regularly.
- Don't give up!

Learning English is hard. It takes many years to become fluent in another language. Keep working to make English a part of your life every day. You can learn to speak English!

From Our Director

By Marcia D'Arcangelo

Yes...we teach English here! But that's not all we do. We care about our students and their families, and are committed to helping them become a part of our community.

Those of us born here have support systems, friends, family, schools and churches. We know where to go for help when we need it. Immigrants are not as fortunate. People new to the U.S.A. are largely on their own. Making your way through daily life in a strange land can be exhausting, frustrating, and seemingly hopeless at times. How do these new arrivals do it?

That's where New Neighbors comes in. In addition to teaching English, our teachers reach out to help in a number

of ways. Our mission is to help immigrant and refugee families become self-sufficient and fully-participating members of our community. This semester we have welcomed students into the neighborhood by connecting them with agencies to find jobs, health care, legal advice, housing, furniture, children's clothing and supplies, and food.

This issue of "New Neighbors News" features our students' stories about their lives here in America and their experience learning English. As we share our common concerns and learn from one another, we are building lasting friendships and a stronger community.



418 S. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 549-0111. www.campaigncenter.org

118 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 549-1450. www.historicchristchurch.org

WHAT I MISS THE MOST BY LIVING HERE

I miss my mother's cooking the most. She made the best mole in the world. It was made with a variety of chilis and a secret ingredient. Coca Cola! It was combined with chicken and served in a tostada. This memory makes me want to be back in Mexico with my mom in her kitchen.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO COME TO THE U.S.?

I was motivated to come to this country for a better life. In the town where I lived in Bolivia, there were hardly any jobs. I came here and I worked at McDonalds and cleaning offices. Now I am married, and I stay home caring for my children. In Bolivia I was very poor. Now I am not. I am glad to have a better life.

(These essays started as discussion questions and then the class worked on the paragraphs as a class writing exercise.)

Fall Events at New Neighbors

- October 3: The New Neighbors Oktoberfest fundraiser exceeded its goal, and raised \$34,073 to support our English classes. Yeah!
- October 3: Our Fire Drill was faster by 2 minutes than last year's drill. Congratulations!
- November 10: The Level 7 field trip to see the Capitol, Supreme Court, and Library of Congress included a lesson on the U.S. system of government.
- November 12: Don Schlichtmann talked about health services in Alexandria.
- November 21: An attorney from Ayuda talked to the teachers on immigration status issues and available legal services.
- November 26-28: We all enjoyed our Thanksgiving break!
- December 3-8: Pre-registration for the spring 2015 semester.
- December 6: New Neighbors joined the 44th Annual Scottish Christmas Walk parade in Old Town Alexandria, benefiting all The Campagna Center programs!
- December 12: Our whole-school party celebrates the half way mark for this year's classes! Congratulations to the students who finished the fall semester. We look forward to seeing you in the spring.

Get Ready for Spring 2015!

- January 15 and 16: Registration for the spring semester
- January 21: Spring classes start
- May 1: End-of-Year Celebration

Level 5 Goes To The Library!

By Katherine Hoffman

Level 5 students took a field trip to the Alexandria Barrett Library in November and learned about the many free services it provides. Six students received new library cards and were excited to learn about the electronic data bases they can use to study for the TOEFL exam and for U.S. citizenship.



Milestones

Advancement

- Jaqueline Rozanski has a new job as a veterinary assistant in Arlington.
- Thatahh "Thais" Santana Campos is working at a design firm in Alexandria.
- Vongvilay "Pui" Valvis was hired as a Lao language instructor at the Foreign Service Institution.
- Tabatha Santos, who is a pediatric nurse in Brazil, volunteers at the Arlington Free Clinic.
- Several students are preparing for or have recently taken the TOEFL exam so they can pursue advanced education at local universities.
- Child care teacher Weona Chambers recently earned her GED, and Uzma Ashar earned her Child Development Associate Credential.

Awards

- Karen Nieves-Lugo has been awarded a research grant from the National Institutes of Health.

Births

- Level 7 student Sonia Pando and her husband, Level 5 student Manuel Candon, are expecting a baby girl in early December. Level 7 student Wendys Medina is also expecting a baby daughter in early December.
- Luis Dubon and Zoila Estrada Garcia in the Intro A class are expecting a baby boy in December. Another baby is due in May to Intro A student Eslam Khalifa.
- Zuhra Sahel and Sonja Khelifi in Intro B class are expecting babies as this newsletter is being prepared! Veronica Roque, also in Intro B class is expecting a baby in early 2015.

Community Support

- Liliana Foronda makes Colombian jewelry which will soon be available at Fair Trade Roots in Arlington.
- Wendys Medina recently completed her immigration application and interview and is now an official resident of the U.S. She is also starting a small business selling crochet shoes, hats and headbands for children.

Starting A Way (continued from page 1)

Fortunately, I have not needed to speak too much English in my jobs, but I still felt a kind of frustration for not being able to communicate with all people. When a friend told me about the New Neighbors program, I was happy, because the price was affordable. When I started classes, I realized the level of teaching was high. I started in Level 3 and I'm in Level 7 now, which is the top level. I cannot take classes every semester, but I take classes at least one semester per year. I have been studying at the New Neighbors center for a long time. I always say to myself, "This might be my last time here," but I register the next year. Why?

Though I have studied at different centers, all of which had adequate instruction, here I found something else. I found people who generously donate time to let us know a little more about their country, their language, and their customs. I still have not been able to make many American friends, but I consider these kind people more than regular teachers.

The classes help me to strengthen my grammar and writing, as well as improve my speaking and listening. They also teach me to believe in myself, to be more confident when I talk in English and, even though I will always have my native accent, the classes help me feel more a part of this country.

I'm really grateful to have found this center with this great group of people. Thank you to everyone who supports this program that is much more than a regular English language school. Thank you for opening your minds and hearts to foreigners. Thank you for giving us the keys to know and love your country.

(These thoughts were shared by Veronica at the New Neighbors 2014 Oktoberfest fundraiser.)

Student Bridges Culture Gap Through Judo

Excerpts from an essay written by Satoshi Ninosaka, Level 6

Currently I am teaching Judo at Seichou Dojo in Alexandria, Virginia on behalf of a Japanese not-for-profit organization called Solidarity of International Judo Education, also known as SIJE. Even before Judo became an Olympic sport, it had been practiced all around the world. However, it was not famous until 1964 when it became an official Olympic sport. Judo Founder, Jigoro Kano, hoped that in addition to the physical aspect of Judo, non Japanese would also embrace its nonviolent ethic, "jityakyouei," which describes the mutual concern that judoka have for each other's well-being. He further hoped that Judo would be integrated into the culture of all countries.

Judo is a bridge between different countries and their peoples. Specifically, the shared experience of Judo training and the shared love of Judo as an art form bring people together. In essence, when disparate peoples walk the singular path of Judo, they share a common foundation that creates a mutual affinity. If people all over the world understood the true meaning of Judo, which is "jityakyouei," then violence would decrease and the world would be a better place. We, at SIJE, endeavor to create a better world through Judo for the benefit of people everywhere. I am honored to represent the SIJE as an international volunteer instructor because I believe deeply in this mission.

Learn Grammatical Patterns Through Songs

Songs are great ways to learn grammatical patterns. Consider these song titles:

- If I Could Turn Back Time
- If I Had A Million Dollars
- I Wish It Would Rain
- Why Don't We Just Dance?
- As Long As You Love Me
- Could I Have This Dance?
- You Ought To Be With Me
- Wouldn't It Be Nice?



Poetry Corner

Inside of Me

By Monique Schuarts (Level 7)

I am a dreamer;
I am a fairy tale reader.
I collect the flowers
And watch the squirrels.



I feel alone;
I hear the silence.
I pick a novel
And stare at nothing.

Dreams happen in my mind;
The busy mind of a quiet girl.
Never mind where they begin,
Scary is their unknown end.

Sweetness in a heart so cold,
Where beautiful dreams are
Remaining on the comfortable shadow
Of my soul, afraid to love.

My Childhood Memory

By Mie Yamauchi, Level 7

This is a story that took place when I was seven years old. I have a brother who is two years older than me. We attended the same school, which was just one minute away from my house. One afternoon, on my way home, there were many kids in front of our school. Sometimes a guy would sell toys, some goods for magic, and little turtles to the kids. The guy showed us how his toys were cool, and he even demonstrated his tricks by using his magical goods. All of the innocent young kids were amazed by his tricks.

That day, the guy was selling many cute yellow chicks. I immediately fell in love with them and wanted to keep a chick, but I didn't have money. Most of the children didn't have money because of our school's rule, and the guy knew it. He always told us to go home at once and ask our mothers for some money to

buy his stuff. But I was sure my mother would say, "NO!"

When I got home, however, I saw my brother was already begging her to buy a chick. My mom was saying that it was impossible, because we didn't have a big yard. She also explained to us how they grow up so fast. My brother and I united only at that moment, even if we fought every day. Finally, my mom said OK, and we jumped up with joy and rushed back to the guy.

The chick was SO cute! We played with him every day, but a few weeks later, as my mom had explained to us, he grew old enough to start crowing every morning. We heard a lot of crowing from some of my neighbors, because their children also bought chicks on the same day from that guy. Hearing their loud crowing everywhere was a weird

situation, because we lived in the city, not around the farm.

One morning, a sad thing happened; our chick disappeared. We were so sad; my mother said minks might have killed him. I suspected my mother of cooking him, but we didn't have chicken dinner the night before his disappearance. The guy still came and sold things in front of our school, but we didn't try to buy anything more after this happened.

(Level 7 is doing a year-long project of writing autobiographical stories. This project allows students to take the grammar they are learning beyond the textbook to write something meaningful. The class provides a good audience for the writing as they listen to their classmates read their stories aloud in English. At the end of the semester (and year), students plan to put their writing into books to share with their loved ones.)

Learning English Is Hard Work

By Level 4 Students

When we first came to the U.S., we didn't understand anything! For example, when we went to the hospital or the mall, no one understood what we were saying. It was hard for us. When we read the newspaper, we couldn't understand the words because the vocabulary was new and difficult to understand. We needed to look up many words in the dictionary. When we were watching TV we didn't understand what they were saying because the people were speaking too fast. It was confusing. Everywhere we went, someone asked us a lot of questions we couldn't answer. Sometimes when we want to talk or discuss something with someone, we feel discouraged not knowing how to say things. When we want to talk with someone, we feel bad because we miss many words. We feel like running away.

Our children learn English at school and now they must help us. This is funny because we are the parents and we are supposed to help them. It is sad that our children are losing our home language and it is really hard to talk with them about what is in our hearts.

We made many mistakes before we learned how things work here. When we make mistakes, we learn so we must not worry about mistakes. We must learn to laugh at our mistakes. Many are funny. For example, some people will give us wrong answers because they think that we mean something different than what we said.

We are trying our best to learn English. We know we should learn English soon. We promise ourselves to work hard and study. We take classes and try to make American friends. The most important thing is for us to talk with others. We read our children English books. We

listen to the radio. We read newspapers and watch TV in English. Another way we practice is to go shopping and speak with people at the store. All of this is hard for us. Our only goal is to speak more and more English! We must have patience and not give up! We can do it!

(This article was written by the Level 4 students during a classroom conversation and writing exercise.)



New Neighbors student Veronica Saenz and Program Director Marcia D'Arcangelo

Some Facts About Us

- This fall 2014 semester we have 161 adult students and 48 children (infants through 4 years old). Students come to us from 38 countries, speaking 20 different languages.
- All nine of the adult English classrooms and four child care classrooms are filled to capacity. We have a waiting list of more than 50 students for the spring 2015 term. Attendance this year has been excellent.