Saying Goodbye, by Karina Duran Useche, Level 7

I am looking at the pictures of the day I crossed the bridge, that symbolic bridge that represented for many years prosperity and the most active border in Latin America. Today it represents (to a few) illicit drug trafficking, guerrilla tactics, and other evils seen only on the border between two countries. For many others, it represents a thread of hope to survive the humanitarian crisis that my country is experiencing, where poverty, hunger, and despair are served at the table of Venezuelans. Our Colombian brothers and sisters open their doors wide in Cúcuta, where we are able to buy food and medicines that have disappeared from our shelves.

For me, walking those 315 meters of the bridge represented the duality. A part of me was dying with each step that I walked to the other side, crossing the Simon Bolivar Bridge, and leaving my most precious treasures: my parents (who were, are, and will be unconditional love to me), my roots, and my friends (with whom I shared laughter at every meeting and shoulders when I needed them). I left behind something I had never before internalized or felt, MY HOMELAND. That day, I understood the meaning of that word, so poorly used and prostituted to feed particular interests. MY HOMELAND, the one who gave all to me, I understood with every tear that poured out of my eyes. MY HOMELAND was diluted behind me, and with that, part of my heart was also still there. Another part of me felt that with every step I took, I embraced the beginning of my new life. At that moment, I felt my body as heavy as lead, and my soul as light as the wind.

Director’s Corner by Marcia D’Arcangelo

Another year has gone by in the blink of an eye! Life happens so fast, and the changes that each day brings can seem to be overwhelming as we move into the future. We marvel at our students’ courage to start over in a new land without the love and care of friends and families far away. So many say they have found a new “family” at New Neighbors.

In this issue, students reflect on the joys of the past and look forward to the opportunities of tomorrow. By learning to speak and write in English, they are preparing to take their place as contributing members of our community. We at New Neighbors are proud to welcome them into our “family” and help them along their chosen pathways.
Level 2 Students Write about Spring, submitted by Level 2 students and teachers Tara Knox and Bill Blair

When our Level 2 class read the *Elizabeth Claire’s Easy English News* last month, one student said, “This is very good for us. It tells us a lot.” We asked the students to write something about an article of their choosing. Like most of us, they focused on the coming of springtime. Here are samples of their inspired and inspiring responses to the March issue.

Written by Halah, inspired by March Comes in Like a Lion and Goes out Like a Lamb. “In March of 2014 suddenly and quietly the war came to my country of Yemen and violence has increased to this day of 2018. Here I can say, but in reverse, ‘March comes in like a lamb and goes out like a lion.’ I hope the war ends as soon as March 2018 comes, so I can say correctly, ‘March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb in my country.’”

A poem by Omra, inspired by Spring Begins

The spring blooms the flowers
And green earth and grows the grass.
And weather comes back temperate.
And come back the birds for trees and to sing
And take their place in the water.
And rejoice the children in the street.

Written by Habiba, inspired by Spring Begins. “In Afghanistan New Year is in spring. At New Year, we make traditional food. We wear new dresses and decorate our homes.” Also, inspired by Spring Begins, Rohafza writes, “The first day of spring is March 20. There are 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness on this day. Americans will be glad to welcome spring this year.” We are honored to welcome spring with our students!

Level B Happenings, submitted by Level B teachers Don and Mary Schlichtmann

Farzana Salih passed her driving test and got her driver’s license early this year. She has been practicing driving to shopping centers with her husband. She says that she is staying off I-395 and the Beltway, as she finds the traffic and speeds there very scary!

Sayed Valizada had her second child, a girl, in early March and was regularly in class until the day before her delivery. Both mother and baby are reportedly doing well.

Ronald Mendez had a tree fall on his deck from the recent windstorm and separate it from the house. He told the class about the experience and everyone was relieved that his house was not damaged.

Class enthusiasm has been strong, with an average of 14.5 students attending each day out of 18 registered.

Home Remedies for Common Ailments, submitted by Level 2

In Level 2, we discussed home remedies for common ailments such as coughs, colds, chills, cuts, burns and upset stomachs. The students shared remedies from their traditions which use things often found in our homes. For colds and coughs, Wisam, Sony and Shafiqa suggest drinking hot water mixed with honey, lemon and ginger. Yrgalem mixes hot water with ginger and honey, without the lemon. Baseera recommends boiling milk with a bit of salt to drink. Habiba suggests drinking lemon in cold tea. Rohafza agrees, but adds sugar to her mixture. Nardos eats a salad with garlic and hot pepper to help with her cough. She also suggests drinking hot water with ginger and honey. Halah recommends eating chocolate for a cold related cough! Yum! Palwasha recommends eating vegetable soup; Farva prefers chicken soup. Farahnaz suggests taking a hot shower and then eating hot soup (chicken or vegetable?) as her helpful home remedy.

For stomach aches, Palwasha and Farva suggest mixing soft rice (with salt). Dinora recommends eating a teaspoon of minced garlic along with water to help with stomach pain. For chills, Bernardo recommends drinking tequila with a bit of lemon and salt. (Editor’s note: This will definitely warm up your insides!) For a fever, Rania recommends a cold washcloth on the forehead, a cold shower and two tablets of Tylenol!

Wisam suggests putting a bit of ground coffee on a small cut. Omra recommends putting a bit of salt on the cut to stop bleeding. For burns, Masooda and Diana suggest placing a slice of potato on the burn. Diana adds that toothpaste can help with the pain. Dinora finds that rubbing the burn in one’s hair helps reduce the pain. Naveeda suggests mixing ginger with olive oil and rubbing this solution on the burn. Rania recommends applying wine to the burn. Bernardo suggests placing an egg white and the skin of an egg on a burn. And finally, Halah suggests rubbing organic honey on a burn. (Editor’s additional note: These are examples of home remedies used by our students and not an endorsement of the remedies’ safety or effectiveness. Always seek a medical opinion when your or any of your family members experience a medical condition or injury.)
We Have Dreams, submitted by Level 3 students and teachers Jin Chong and Susan Anderson

We are here to learn English because we know dreams don’t work unless we try. As Colin Powell said, “A dream doesn’t become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.” Here are the dreams of our Level 3 students:

- I want to have my own company. In two years, I want to be the owner of my company. I want to study computer in school in two years and I want to visit my country in five years. **Miguel Gomez**

- I like to work. I want to learn English so that I can work. I like to make homes look tidy and refined. In five years, I want to be a house designer. **Budoor Al-Dabab**

- There are a lot of goals I have to accomplish. My first goal is to be able to speak English well and know the secret for being successful in the U. S. so that I and my family can have a good life. After finishing my education, I want to become a journalist. **Nafisa Latifi**

- My goal at work is to be an assistant nurse. Within one year I want to be an assistant nurse in a hospital. In five years, learning and training hard, I would like to be a nurse. Since I was a little kid, I have always dreamed of being a nurse because of my wish to help people in need. I’m the kind of person who would like to help and care for people. Therefore, nursing fits with my dream of a job I would like to do. **Fatma Jemal**

- I have a small child care [business] now but I want to open a big child care center. I need to take a permit test for 12 children because I have a permit for only 4 children now. I am happy with my job because I like helping other families. In 5 years, I want to open a big child care center and to give jobs to other people. **Candida A. Mejia**

- In five years, I will achieve one of the most important goals I have ever set, which is to become an interior designer. To reach this goal, I have to get an associate degree in art. It will take 2 to 3 years in college. I will completely focus on it. After my first goal is accomplished, I will go to the best university in the States to fulfill my dream. If all goes well and I start at the university of my choice, my next assignment will be learning interior design as much as possible. **Sharifa Ali Momand**

- My dream is to become a professional event planner in five years. I know it needs more than just a love of a great party to succeed in this fast-paced field. I have to have an eye for detail and an ability to handle constant deadlines and pressure. To reach the final goal of being a successful event planner, my short term goal is to earn a bachelor’s degree in hospitality management followed by internships at one of the famous event planning companies. **Birshna Ahmadi**

Level 1’s Favorite Recipes, submitted by Level 1 students and teacher Sue Tate

The favorite dessert of **Nilofer Fayzi**, **Nazifa Mirwais**, **Ruqia Karwar**, **Lina Stanekzi**, and **Parwaneh Ehrari** from **Afghanistan**, is called Firni. It is similar to American custard. The ingredients are milk, cornstarch, sugar, pistachios and sometimes fresh fruit. **Lydia Gutierrez** loves Chaja, which her mother made when she was growing up in **Uruguay**. It’s a cake with peaches and whipped cream layers. **Elbia Godoy** and her family, from **Guatamala**, love Quesadilla, a coffee cake with cheese, cream, flour, sugar, eggs and butter. It is baked for 40 minutes in the oven. **Malina Jalali** loves the special Afghan cookies called Khajoor. Ingredients are flour, eggs, butter, sugar, flour, and yeast. Mix, let rest and cook small balls in oil. **Magda Abulraman** from **North Sudan** and **Nafisa Naziry** from **Afghanistan** both love a dessert made from rice and milk, plus sugar and oil. Use not only rice and milk but also sugar and oil. **Anna Flores** from **El Salvador**, ate Pan de Maiz as a child at Christmas. Combine corn, condensed milk, cinnamon, butter, flour and bake for 30 minutes. The favorite dessert of **Samira Ibrahim** from **Egypt** is Baklava, a dessert we know well in the U.S., made with sugar, honey, nuts and rolled phyllo dough, sliced and baked.
Places Important to the Students of Level 6, submitted by Level 6 students and teachers Pat DePuy and Lois Cesarini

- My favorite city is Atbarra, north of Sudan. It is a great city for living. It is quiet, clean and safe. Also, it is a multicultural city, which was an advantage for me. I learned about different cultures. Atbara has many interesting places for tourists. There are several parks, green places and historic old buildings. The main means of transportation is the bicycle. You can go where you want easily and quietly. I loved living in Atbara, a truly beautiful city. People went out of their way to make visitors or new comers feel welcome. By Tamadur Salih

- My elementary school in Morazan, El Salvador was a great place. It was small and just had four classrooms. They were painted blue and white, the colors of our flag. There was a playground with trees. The school was in the center of my village, with houses all around. Because there were good teachers, I learned a lot there. My elementary school was very important to me when I was growing up. By Mirian Reyes

- I remember my Aunt Sharifa’s house in Kabul. It was a beautiful two floor house, which had several rooms and a nice big garden full of different trees and beautiful flowers. There were apple trees, almond trees, pomegranate trees and a huge grapevine. Every summer afternoon the whole family sat under the grapevines’ shadow where they drank tea and spent their time with each other. In another side of the garden, there was a jasmine bush which I still remember for its nice magnificent smell. I always put the small jasmine flowers in my hair and dreamt I was a princess. My aunt was a kind, hospitable woman whom I loved. Her house is close to my heart. By Mursal Zabih

- My grandparents’ house was the most comfortable place for growing up. The house is in a small, beautiful town in Puerto Rico, in the middle of high and green mountains with many crops of coffee, plantains and oranges. Near the house there is a river where we spent the best weekends and summer holidays. My grandparents’ house was the best place that I have ever known. I think grandparents’ houses are the place where every kid feels secure, comfortable and loved. By Yazmin Rios

Continued on page 5.

Scottish Walk, submitted by Joby Dupuis, editor

Every year, Alexandria holds a parade in celebration of the start of the holiday season. The Scottish Christmas Walk is held in early December in Old Town. The parade honors The Campagna Center and its programs, including New Neighbors. Bands, floats, politicians and other special sights are included! Many of our students and teachers walk in the parade each year. It is a fun opportunity for our newest neighbors – YOU – to join in a traditional American custom – a parade! It is fun to bring your family, especially your children, and walk along in the parade with so many others who work and benefit from the programs of The Campagna Center. Watch for this fun event next December. We would love to have you join us!

Table Talks

Family Literacy Library Day

Page 4 * NNN * May 2018
Places Important to the Students of Level 6, continued from page 4.

Mexico, a town in Addis Abela, is important to me because it is where I went to college for the first time and I got freedom to go everywhere. When I was in college, I met my best friends, Tigest and Eisabeth. We always sat in an empty room and talked a lot about things. We laughed and had a lot of fun. We love each other and we were always together. When I remember this time and place that made me so happy, I have good memories in my mind. By Mesert Ayelutsega

Afghanistan is where I was born and grew up, it is where I share my sadness and happiness with my family, relatives, and friends. I have a lot of memories. When I was 5 years old, my mom dressed me in new clothes for the holidays. She held my hand and took me to my grandfather’s house where we meet all our family. According to our culture, they gave me money for my pocket. I felt so happy, as if I were rich. I counted it over and over. I will always miss the place where I was born. By Fakhra Fekrat

I think the Great Wall of China is one of the magnificent historical places in the world. I went there when I was only 13 years old. The Great Wall is far out of town and we had to rent a huge van to go there. The road was full of curves like a big snake. It took an hour and half to get to the destination, but it was worth it. My tears came suddenly as soon as I saw the Great Wall even from far away. Who could believe that human hands made this huge wall! I cannot describe the greatness of the Great Wall with words. You shouldn’t miss walking on the Great Wall before you lose your power to walk! By Sepideh Mallaheekaraee

My grandfather’s house was far away from our house. It was in a rural area all around beautiful mountains, a small river and the blue sky. There was also clean air. When I was on summer or winter vacation, I always went there. I met my close relatives and spent time with them. I was able to hang out with my cousins. I was able to swim in the summer and to ride a sleigh down the hill in the winter. I picked lots of apples with a very red color. It was very fun. I looked forward to being there. I have good memories of the place. This was a very fantastic place that I cannot forget about this place, which I love. By Hye Min Do

An important place during my childhood in Kabul, was my family’s apartment called Mavoyan. This place was important to me because I had so many good friends there. There was a small playground under the building where we stayed all afternoon. We played jump rope and hide and seek with each other. We had snacks like cookies, chocolate and crackers during our play times. That place was very safe for me and I really miss that place and I wish one day I can go and refresh my childhood memories. By Arezzo Papal
What Happens in Introductory Level A2? submitted by Level A2 teachers Laurie Tracy, Trang Gueron and Julie Kehrli

Intro A-2 includes students from Afghanistan, El Salvador, Eritrea and Guatemala. Our excellent student from Romania, Viorel, returned to his country but we hope he returns to the USA and to the New Neighbors Program. We are learning contractions, dates, and times, among many other things. We now have a hand-made USA map by a terrific graphic artist, Sarah Jesup. We look at states, regions and geographical features of the USA on the map during our lessons. In the fall, our students learned many new words and concepts. We talked about time, family, money and holidays, including Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day. One of our teachers, Cathy Cabrey and her husband, invited all of us to Thanksgiving Dinner at their house. For New Years, many of us watched the ball drop in Times Square on television. All of our students now have library cards.

From Former Student, Diana Omar, submitted by Nancy Leisch, her former teacher

“I want to let you know what I am doing now! After I left Campagna Center’s New Neighbors English program, I took a child care class (for professional providers). I now have a City of Alexandria license, and am ready to start my own business at home. I recommend that students who wish to have their own child care business take this class. It is a very good program and it is free. Everyone can take this class through Job Link.

Editor’s note: Alexandria Workforce Development, known as JobLink, partners with New Neighbors in many ways. It is an excellent source of information for students wishing to find work. There may be eligibility requirements before students can take the class Diana mentions for free. If you are interested, contact JobLink directly at (703)746-5990.

A Debate about Credit Cards, submitted by Level 7

As the fall semester closed, the students in Level 7 were learning to express opinions and to politely state their disagreement with others. In order to practice these skills, we had a debate. A debate is a public discussion that allows all sides of the topic to be discussed. There are two teams: one arguing against and one arguing for the question asked. Our topic was whether credit cards are a beneficial tool for managing personal finances. The class spent time, in class and at home, reading articles that presented the opinions of experts in financial management on whether credit cards are a good thing or a bad thing!

The class learned that a great many Americans have a lot of debt because they are unable to manage their credit card use properly. They also learned that using credit cards is very expensive if you don’t pay off your balances every month. And, they learned that there are many hidden fees for those who don’t pay attention when applying for a credit card. They also learned, however, that credit cards can help you build good credit if managed correctly, which helps when getting apartments, homes and cars. Credit cards can also be “life savers” in times of emergency and they make travel and online purchases so much easier. In presenting these arguments, the class practiced using English phrases, like “It seems to us,” “we respectfully disagree,” “in our opinion,” and “the evidence shows.” Our debate ended in a tie because both sides did such an excellent job in stating their arguments, challenging the arguments of the other team and summarizing their opinions in a closing statement. Everyone agreed that debates can be fun and educational!

Level 7 debate team listens as their spokesperson Nadia Mohammed argues the pitfalls of credit card use!
**Turducken Thanksgiving Cultural Exchange, by Cathy and Richard Cabrey**

Our Thanksgiving guests walked out of the door and down the stairs with smiles on their faces. My wife and I looked at each and agreed that this was one of the best Thanksgivings we could remember- a true Thanksgiving feast. Our guests were not the usual family and extended family. We had just hosted seven Afghani families and their children along with a wonderful lady from Eritrea.

My wife, Cathy, is a volunteer teacher at New Neighbors, teaching basic English to new immigrants. Her classes normally contain a wide mix of students from different countries, although this year’s class was primarily women from Afghanistan. Cathy decided to see if her students would be interested in joining us for this traditional American holiday. The answer was a resounding “YES”! We could expect almost 40 friends and family in our home for Thanksgiving.

We were up by 6:00 a.m. Thanksgiving morning stuffing the Turducken, a chicken inside of a duck inside of a turkey with stuffing between each layer. Then we had seven hours to prepare for our guests’ arrival. At 3:00 p.m. the guests began to arrive all dressed up, with the children wearing fancy clothes. Each family carried in large containers of appetizers, which were really more like main courses and deserts. The scent was absolutely wonderful.

We asked all of our guests to join us in the kitchen so we could show them how we had set the food up buffet style. I had not planned on making a formal speech, but I said, “Cathy and I thank all of you for taking the time to share in this great American Tradition with us. Cathy and I have a lot to be thankful for, but we are especially thankful that you have all joined us today. Our country was founded on immigrants and will continue to prosper because of immigrants. Regardless of what you all read or hear in the news, we want to welcome you with open arms.”

I’m not sure our Afghan guests fully embraced the sweet potatoes and the mashed potatoes that we love so much, but the turducken was definitely a hit. I can honestly say that the rice with lamb that I piled on my plate several times and the yoghurt with pistachios should be a new staple at our Thanksgiving table. As I walked around from room to room listening to the laughter and translation of stories, I could see that all were enjoying the time together. Warm handshakes from the men to me and hugs from the women to Cathy formed our goodbyes at the door. Cathy and I immediately agreed that we would do this again. My only regret is that my two-year-old grandson will not likely remember this Thanksgiving, on which two cultures shared smiles and laughter.
Join us for classes in the fall!
Classes start September 10th!

- **This year** all registration will be **online** only, starting August 1, 2018, at https://campagnacenter.schoolforms.org/newneighborsELL

- **HELP** with online application will be available at The Campagna Center building located at 418 S. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, on the following dates:

  **August 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, and 24**
  (From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. each day)

- Class space is limited. Registration is open only until spaces are filled.

- **TESTING** for New Students will be at Christ Church on August 29 and September 4, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

- Don’t wait! Child care spots fill up quickly.