Giving the Gift of Language

Summer 2011

In Memory of Joan Broude

Last March, the co-founder of the school and my dear friend, Joan Broude, passed away. For the first five years the school was open, Joan and I were co-directors. In 1998, Joan retired and spent many years with her husband, Joe, traveling, spending time in New Hampshire, volunteering, gardening, doing all the things she loved to do, which included remaining on The ILC’s Board.

Prior to founding The ILC, Joan and I had worked together for 14 years at an adult education program. Joan was a counselor and I was a teacher. During the 1980s, we saw the tremendous influx of immigrants into the country especially from Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia. We talked about the intensive immersion program that we would like to create to teach English.

In 1992, with initial funding, Joan and I opened The ILC with three classes, three teachers and a waiting list of 80. The support and encouragement she gave helped me realize my vision of a school for immigrant adults that would provide the skills necessary for them to become successful workers, parents and community members. To date, we have helped 6,500 immigrants from 109 countries who live in 74 Greater Boston communities. Seventy percent achieved their goals of finding jobs, starting businesses, entering training programs, going to college and becoming citizens, not to mention being able to talk to a doctor or their children’s teachers. I know Joan would be proud to walk through the school and see the 450 students in 21 classes and would want to find a way to help the 1,000 applicants on the waiting list.

After 9/11, Joan and I talked about the fear our students felt just coming to school. We talked about the increase in anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric based on misinformation and the need to educate the public that immigrants are good for the country, the economy and our communities. Today, The ILC’s Public Education Institute does this through many programs.

Joan received many awards over the years of her career including Counselor of the Year Award. Her compassion for others, her ability to listen and understand and her love of life positively impacted so many lives including mine.

I will always cherish the years we worked together and everything I learned from her. I will especially remember the laughter we shared.
THE ILC STUDENTS
Becoming successful workers, parents and community members, thanks to the generosity of our donors

Tsehaye Tsige Beyene, Ethiopia

Tsehaye Tsige Beyene, his wife and four little children came to the United States from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, three years ago. Tsehaye is a priest in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and was told by his patriarch, “Your job is in Boston.”

Speaking only Amharic and Geez, Tsehaye worked with his congregation but needed to learn English. The ILC was the answer. Since he joined the Literacy Class, Tsehaye has made great progress and thinks The ILC is “very good.” He is especially grateful to his teachers, Kathleen, Fatima and Norma, for the help they have given him.

Tsehaye’s congregation has grown and keeps him very busy. He is especially appreciative of all this country has to offer after spending some time in South Africa. His four children are doing extremely well in school and there is a new Beyene, a little boy born last July 4th.

Claudette Aspilaire, Haiti

Claudette Aspilaire speaks for all immigrants and refugees when she says, “It’s really difficult when you leave home.” During Claudette’s long academic career at home in Haiti, she was an elementary school teacher, an assistant head mistress and a high school science, French and religion teacher.

After the earthquake in 2010, Claudette and her three children came to Malden to stay with relatives. Her husband, with whom she worked in a private investigation company, remained in Port au Prince.

This June, Claudette’s twin son and daughter graduated from Malden High School where her younger daughter is a student. Because Claudette’s English is so good, she is a volunteer teaching assistant as well as a student in The ILC Theater Class. Being a student at The ILC has made leaving home a little easier for Claudette who believes, “The school is really good for people coming to the United States who don’t speak English.”

Student Voices

My ambition is to become a medical assistant. I chose this profession because I like health care. It is important for me to earn money. To achieve my ambition I must improve my English. I also need to study for a medical assistant course. I have to manage my time between taking care of my body and studying. I do expect to achieve this ambition one day because I am willing to work hard for this.

— Dharma Karki, Nepal

I want to become a citizen. I want to achieve this because I realize that citizens have better opportunities for work. I am in a part-time job as a janitor. Since I came to this country I’m trying to find a job. In my country I worked in a bank in quality control of credit cards. I have much knowledge in computers, but here it has been very difficult for me to find a full-time job. That is the reason that I have to make more effort in my English class. I am a shy person and I have to take more opportunities to speak in front of people. I want to become a citizen in six months. I want a better job.

— Wilton Lorenzo, The Dominican Republic
The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, MA is a non-profit organization that helps immigrants and refugees become successful workers, parents and community members through direct service programs and public education. Our direct service programs provide free year-round English classes to immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston. The ILC further supports immigrants through the Public Education Institute, which informs Americans about the economic and social contributions of immigrants in our society. For more information, visit www.ilctr.org.

**THE ILC PROMOTES CITIZENSHIP**

**Citizenship Class**

How many of us could pass the citizenship test? It is pretty certain that everyone in Al May’s Citizenship Class will. After 14 years at The ILC, first as a volunteer and then as a Family Literacy and Citizenship teacher, Al knows all the ins and outs of the very complicated path to citizenship and teaches his students with patience and common sense. He likes to “get involved in politics, history and different views.”

The 18 students in his class practice answers to the personal questions found on the test as well as learn the answers to U.S. history questions. When students are asked why they want to become U.S. citizens, Al hopes they will answer, “to vote.”

Some of Al’s students may be eligible to take part in a swearing-in ceremony to be sponsored by The ILC on September 22, 2011, at The Malden Senior Center.

**Swearing-In Ceremony**

On September 22, 2011, The ILC and the City of Malden will co-host a **Swearing-In Ceremony** at the Malden Senior Center. One hundred immigrants will become new citizens during the first ceremony of its kind to be held in Malden.

Preceded by a color guard, the court will sit with a federal district court judge presiding. Diane Portnoy, The ILC Founder and CEO, will welcome the new citizens. Her message will be followed by the administration of the oath. Malden Mayor Richard C. Howard and Congressman Edward J. Markey have been invited to attend along with other special guests. The ceremony will conclude with ILC students leading the new citizens and their guests in singing the national anthem.

The following ILC students became citizens since January 2011:

- Adelina Drummond, Brazil
- Yorose Carine Joseph, Haiti
- Kettiele Marie Baptiste, Haiti
- Vera Da Silva, Brazil
- Liliya Ennilova, Russia
- Chun Mei Lu, China
- Malvina Dikler, Russia
- Cham Francois, Haiti
- Fu Hua, China
- Xiu Yan Lin, China
- Bertha Piquard de Zamora, El Salvador

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FOCUS ON FUNDERS

Michele and John Popeo

John tells us why he and Michele are funders: “I first became involved with The ILC back in 1997. Michele and I believe in the school’s mission and we’re willing to continue to support it. Giving immigrants the tools they need to make a better life for themselves is a winning proposition. Students will ultimately play a more meaningful role in society and add value to the economy when they enter the workforce. What really impresses us about The ILC is how well the school is run. It’s clear to us that every dollar is put to good use.”

Sonia and Jason Silverman

Jason describes why he and Sonia support The ILC: “We are both children and grandchildren of immigrants from Cuba and Poland who also lived in Venezuela before coming to the U.S. We were both raised in Miami and loved the stories, history and cultures of people from around the world. Sonia became an immigration attorney as a result of her experiences. In 2004, we met Diane and visited the school. It was terrific to learn that there was a school dedicated to promoting immigrants as assets to the country. We are delighted to have the opportunity to help other immigrants become part of this great country where you are free to maximize your imagination, potential and effort without limitation. It’s the American Dream. In return, immigrants do their part by enriching our society.”

BOARD NEWS

ILC Board Chair Arthur G. Koumantzelis Honored

Arthur G. Koumantzelis was honored recently with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Alpha Omega Council at a ceremony held at Boston Marriott Copley Place. The Council is dedicated to “uniting Americans of Hellenic ancestry to promote and encourage American patriotism while cultivating the ideals of Hellenism.” Arthur is a co-founder of the Council and was recognized for his “uncompromising integrity and true professionalism.” The event was attended by 300 guests and emceed by former Governor Michael Dukakis. Diane Portnoy was one of several speakers. She praised Arthur for the valuable contributions he has made to the school over the years as Board Chair.

In Memory of Barry Bragen

Barry served The ILC in several capacities. He was a volunteer and a substitute teacher who gave students the tools to navigate our complex social systems. He was also a valued member of The ILC Board of Trustees. His passing in February 2011 saddened ILC staff, students and the Board.

Barry began volunteering at The ILC in 1999 after he retired as a computer programmer and communications engineer. He was a member of the Malden ABE Community Planning Advisory Council and volunteered with AARP. He also volunteered with AARP assisting senior citizens with income tax preparation.

Active all his life, Barry was an avid hiker who loved to travel to interesting destinations. He was known to arrive at The ILC with his pant legs rolled up having ridden his bike from his home in Melrose. Barry was a dedicated and committed volunteer whose presence will be missed at The ILC.
The 13th Annual ILC Golf Classic Brings Good Weather and Good Golf

There never was a more beautiful day than June 6, 2011. One hundred and twenty-eight golfers enjoyed the brilliant sun and cool breezes on Kernwood Country Club’s fine course followed by a traditional clambake. More than $300,000 was raised for ILC programs. The ILC is deeply grateful to the law firm of Sullivan & Worcester LLP and Reit Management & Research LLC, the event sponsors, and all sponsors, friends of The ILC and volunteers for making this signature event one to remember.

The first place winners in the Scramble Division with a score of 59 went to David Blackman, Jim Collins, Randy Williamson and Chris Kollme. The second place winners in the Scramble Division at 62 were Will Corkhill, Cliff Booth, Dan Yamron and Jack Dunphy. Other winners were Larry Christofori, closest to the pin; Jim Collins, longest drive for men; Lauria Brennan, longest drive for women; Jack Dunphy, longest drive for seniors and Will Corkhill, putting contest. Congratulations to all.

Low gross in the Best Ball Division with a score of 65 went to, from the left: Bill Clark, Rich Davey, Bill Sullivan and Brian Golden.

Low net in the Best Ball Division with a score of 56 went to, from the left: Charles Nabatis, Dennis Frolin, Mike Ciccone and Gary Stevens.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ILC’S AUTUMN BENEFIT

Wednesday, October 19, 2011

The ILC is excited to announce that this year’s Autumn Benefit will be held at the Museum of Science in Boston. The evening will begin with a cocktail reception and a tour of the Museum’s newest exhibit, “A Day in Pompeii,” which opens on October 2. On view will be more than 250 priceless artifacts including wall-sized frescoes, gold coins, jewelry, grave goods, marble and bronze statuary and other dazzling examples of ancient Rome’s artistry. The exhibit paints a picture of the rich culture, spirituality and day-to-day customs of the people of ancient Pompeii. The evening will include a seated dinner catered by Wolfgang Puck in the Museum’s Riverside Café. Please plan on joining The ILC at this very special event.

College for a Day

Many ILC students share the goal of attending college. In March, 40 ILC students got their first taste of a college experience by attending “College for a Day,” sponsored by Northeast SABES (System for Adult Basic Education Support). The event was held at Northern Essex Community College where students attended classes, met professors, learned about financial aid and heard first hand from a panel of adults, just like them, who successfully made the transition to community college. Class subjects ranged from small business start-up to criminal justice to dental assisting. Students came away informed and inspired.
Volunteers

Become an ILC Volunteer

Are you interested in supporting immigrants and refugees? As an ILC volunteer, you will become familiar with ESOL teaching. You will help immigrants assimilate to their new nation by providing educational programming for a growing, diverse community of adult students from around the world. In addition, you will be enriched by your interaction with them.

Please contact Holly Jones, Director of Human Resources, at (781) 322-9777 or email her at hjones@ilctr.org.

Daughter of Immigrants Gives Back

ILC volunteer Starr Dimitri is the daughter of immigrants. Her father traveled to America in steerage on the Carpathia from his village in Greece. He fought for this country in World War I and later entered an arranged marriage with Starr's Greek mother. Although her father had never been to school, he understood that “education opens doors” and eventually Starr attended Brown University and received a Ford Foundation Fellowship to the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

A musician since childhood, Starr taught immigrant children through music in her first experimental ESOL classes and now finds that working with adult ILC students “takes me back to my childhood. The stories that immigrant women tell tug at my heart strings.”

Satisfaction Found Through Volunteering

Gene Moulton explains the reasons and rewards of volunteering at The ILC: “It is especially satisfying helping immigrants adjust to a new life. They have bravely come from far away leaving family and friends. Those of us who were born here forget that our ancestors took brave steps to emigrate from distant lands for a better life in the New World. The process is on-going.”

In addition to his work at The ILC, Gene prepares students for the citizenship test and holds conversation classes at the Reading Public Library. He also gives tours of Boston’s North End for Boston by Foot. He has been volunteering at The ILC for eight years.

Public Education Institute

This past year, the Public Education Program expanded to become The ILC’s Public Education Institute as we move to educate the public on a national scale. If the United States is to remain an economic powerhouse, the public needs to understand that immigrants are a vital part of this.

Seven studies have been released to date (www.ilctr.org) with three more in the works: “2011 Massachusetts Immigrants by the Numbers,” “Children of Immigrant Entrepreneurs-Memories and Influences” and a yet untitled study on immigrant growth businesses and the green economy.

In addition, a book that explores America's immigrant groups and their accomplishments in the face of nativism will debut in the fall of 2012.

These projects supplement the online database “Immigrant Research and Information” (www.immigrationresearch-info.org), a collaboration with the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

To learn more, contact Public Education Institute Director Marcia Drew Hohn at mhohn@ilctr.org.
Welcome New Staff Members

Jeantilus Gedeus is a man of many talents. He is a trained Montessori teacher, a musician, a plumber and now a teacher at The ILC. Born in Cap Haitian, Haiti, Gedeus came to the United States four years ago to complete his education. He found work as a plumber and joined a Haitian church in Watertown where his talent in flute, piano and voice were put to good use. He also put his name on the waiting list at The ILC.

After an eleven month wait, Gedeus joined a Level Five Class at The ILC and volunteered in the Literacy Class Program. In January 2011, he joined The ILC staff as a teacher aide, musician and singing coach for The ILC Theater Class. He continues to play and sing in the choir at his church.

Gedeus’s thoughts on The ILC: “It is a family. I am very comfortable here. I am in my plate as we say in Creole.”

Denzil Mohammed, the new Assistant Director of The ILC’s Public Education Institute, grew up in Trinidad and Tobago where “diversity is the norm.” These islands celebrate Indian, African, Chinese and Portuguese traditions so joining The ILC staff “comes naturally.” Denzil began his career in journalism while in high school and still writes a column for the Trinidad Publishing Company. A graduate of the University of the West Indies, he continued his education at Northeastern University where he created his own masters program in global communications. Before coming to The ILC, Denzil worked as a communications specialist at swissnex/Boston Consulate of Switzerland in Cambridge. His interest in intercultural issues in communications and his networking and writing skills will strengthen The ILC’s efforts to educate the public about the positive impact of immigrants on the economy and the country.

Karen Glover, the new Director of Communications, believes in the mission of The ILC: “It’s a great cause. We are a country of immigrants. We should support newcomers.”

A graduate of Indiana University with an MBA from the University of Michigan, Karen brings 20 years of expertise in communications and marketing. She is a member of Boston Women Communicators and the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Karen will work closely with ILC staff to share the successes of the school to a broader audience and help spread the word about the positive impact of immigrants on our society.

The ILC Restructures

The ILC is pleased to announce the following changes in staff positions to provide greater service to students.

Holly Jones—Director of Human Resources
Kathleen Klose—Director of The ILC Theater and Literacy Programs
Karen Oakley—Director of English Language Programs
Jean Smith—Director of the Family Literacy Program
Kathy G. Smith—Assistant Director and Director of Development

The ILC is a not-for-profit corporation supported by tax-deductible charitable contributions and, in part, by funding from The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Mystic Valley Elder Services, Inc., the Massachusetts Executive Offices of Elder Affairs and the Federal Administration on Aging, and the cities of Malden and Medford, Massachusetts. The ILC admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin or disability.
It is with our deepest thanks that we recognize the following individuals, community groups, corporations and foundations that made financial and in-kind contributions to The ILC between January 25 and June 30, 2011.

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Special donations have been received for the following:

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Ben Gilstein  
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Simon Katz  
Blanche Portnoy

**In honor of:**  
Jonnathon Berkman  
The Bornstein Family  
Sasa Espitia and Family  
Jenny Fever  
Natalie Kaplan  
Jean Perkins

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