Almost Famous

Imagine what it would feel like to be a published author in another language. That's the feeling of pride and accomplishment we strive to give our students through The ILC Student Newsletter. Your support makes this possible.

Every class, from the Literacy Program through the Immigrant Theater Group, contributes something. As a reader, I also get a glimpse into the immigrant experience through their stories. If you are on our mailing list, you will soon receive a copy of the 2013 Student Newsletter.

A few students are selected to be the newsletter "editors" each year. They set the theme of the newsletter and contribute their own writing. In this edition of New American Stories, I'm introducing you to this year's editors. I'm sure you will be as impressed with them as I am.

Thank you for your continued support.

Diane Portnoy
President and CEO, The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.
**Ligia**

Ligia earned a law degree in Brazil and worked for a bank. When she was laid off in 2000, she decided to take a risk and move with her husband and two sons to the U.S. Her sons both graduated high school in Massachusetts. Her youngest son now has a degree from Bunker Hill Community College and plans to get a four-year degree from Bentley. Her oldest son is in medical school in Brazil.

"When I came, my dream was to put my sons in a good college," Ligia explained. "My dream came true, and now my dream is to work in a lawyer's office and specialize in immigration." Her own experience working with a lawyer to obtain her U.S. citizenship inspired her to return to the law and help other immigrants.

Ligia came to The ILC in 2012, and she regrets delaying her English studies. "Nobody told me to learn English when I came here, and now I pay the price," she said. "English is the first obstacle to do anything you want: school, doctor, job. There are many opportunities if you learn English. Doors open for you."

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**Priscille**

Priscille is our most experienced writer. She worked as a journalist in her home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She loved her work, but she thought her long-term chances for success were greatest in the U.S. In 2011, after winning the diversity lottery, she joined her sister in Malden, MA.

With limited English skills and quite a bit of culture shock, she knew she would need help. She is now studying English at The ILC, working at the Sheraton Hotel and Boston College, and adjusting to American culture. She particularly likes the openness of the American people and the feeling of freedom and security she has here.

Her English has improved, and she can now keep up with the news, which is very important to a journalist. Priscille was thrilled when she was asked to work on the student newsletter. She wants to get back to her career in journalism, and this was her first chance to try interviewing and writing in English. Her next goal is to get a journalism degree from an American university.

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**Silvia**

Silvia came to the U.S. ten years ago to join her husband. He had been living and working in Massachusetts for four years before she arrived. She worked at Au Bon Pain until her second child was born. The children are now eight and four, and Sylvia devotes her time to caring for her children and studying English at The ILC.

Before arriving in the U.S., Silvia knew no English. She took classes in another program to get by, but it was not enough to meet her goals. She was a nurse in El Salvador, and she hopes to return to the medical profession.

She says, "The ILC is an excellent program. I wish I had found this school before. The other program was just the basics. Now I am learning grammar and how to speak politely. I'm now learning vocabulary that my eight-year-old daughter does not know."
Theva dreamed of coming to the U.S. ever since she was a child in Sri Lanka. Her dream came true in 2009 when she and her husband won the U.S. diversity visa lottery. That same year, the 26-year-long Sri Lankan civil war came to an end.

In her home country, Theva earned a degree in economics. She taught high-school economics and coached girls basketball. She had to start her education over again when she entered the U.S. Having studied some English in school gave her a head start, and she entered an intermediate English class at The ILC in 2010. Although medical issues forced her to take several breaks, she stuck with it and is now in the highest level class and volunteers once a week in the Literacy Program. She says modestly, "Now I can understand and speak a little English."

Theva says she learned a lot working on the student newsletter and picked up new computer skills by laying out the newsletter and working with graphics. Her goals are to enter a certificate program in the fall, find a job next year and become a U.S. citizen. She also looks forward to playing basketball this summer.

About Us

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that helps immigrants and refugees become successful workers, parents and community members through direct service programs and public education. Our direct service program provides 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 http://www.ilctr.org.