Dear Readers:

When non-English speaking adult immigrants arrive in the United States, the language barrier is their most important problem to solve. They struggle to find a school where they can learn English as quickly as possible.

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) is the best school for immigrants. It helps adult immigrants learn the English language and understand American culture. ILC students come from 81 Greater Boston communities and speak more than 68 languages. The ILC has served more than 7,300 students from 118 countries. The school offers free English language and computer classes and supports immigrant students who want to become U.S. citizens.

Many immigrants would like to become citizens, but the process has become more difficult and expensive. However, the benefits of citizenship are immense. As a U.S. citizen, you can vote. You are eligible for many federal jobs, and you receive benefits. For example, citizenship makes it easier to bring family members to the U.S.

Students at The ILC are making their lives better in their new country. They are “Learning Together for Success.”

Thank you,

The Student Editors

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The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. 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. and the Massachusetts Executive Offices of Elder Affairs, and the cities of Malden and Medford, Massachusetts. The ILC admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin or disability.
Interview with Diane Portnoy  
President and CEO

Diane Portnoy, the President and CEO of The ILC, came to this country from Poland with her parents when she was just three years old. The family landed at Ellis Island, New York in 1949. Diane and her brother, who was born here, grew up in Malden. Their father worked hard in a mill for his children’s education. Diane graduated from Malden High School, Boston University and from Cornell University.

Diane’s parents couldn’t speak English when they came to America, and there was no school here for them to learn. Diane decided that she would start a school for adult immigrants where they could learn English to make their lives easier. She began The Immigrant Learning Center in 1992.

After 9/11, Diane was very upset about the way immigrants were being treated in this country. She hated to hear people say “bad things” about immigrants. She decided to start the Public Education Institute to help people understand how important immigrants are in this country. Last year she started the Institute for Immigration Research with George Mason University to continue this work.

Diane’s passion, dedication and hard work have made The ILC a success. Since 1992, more than 7,300 students have studied English at The ILC. Diane is a wonderful human being worthy of admiration.

Interview with Mehrnoush Bakhshandeh

Mehrnoush has been teaching for about 26 years. Before The ILC she taught at North Shore Community College for 16 years in the ESL program where she was the coordinator. In 2008 at The ILC, Mehrnoush started teaching Level 3 and now she is a Level 4 teacher. Teaching at The ILC gives her the chance to know not only more people but also different cultures.

According to Mehrnoush, the best way to learn is to set up goals and try new things. Her advice to ILC students is: “Try to predict possible obstacles, try to overcome the obstacles and ask people for help. Don’t be shy.” Mehrnoush is a great teacher, and she likes hard-working students.

Interview with Jean Smith

Jean was a teacher for 20 years when she sent her resume to The ILC. She enjoys working with immigrants and refugees and feels at home at The ILC. Jean teaches Family Literacy and has been at The ILC for eight years.

Jean is also an artist. She went to art school to become a painter and has shown her work in many exhibitions. Jean is a vegetarian. She is interested in animals and works to help protect them.

Jean has good advice for students: “Listen to the teacher and try to sit next to students who do not speak your language.”
My name is **Priscille Manuelo.** I am from Congo. When I got to America, I was a little worried because I didn’t know how I am going to improve my English, and I didn’t know anything about American culture. Thanks to my sister who researched online English programs in Malden and found The ILC program. With their help, now I’m able to improve my English to make it better than before. Also, The ILC helps me to know American culture. I have found the culture is totally different from my Congolese culture, but I like American culture as well. People over here don’t hesitate to speak their minds, and they are not scared of asking someone for help. I love America because everyone is free, and America offers a lot of opportunities if we study well. I realize the opportunities I have here are more than I’d have anywhere else. I am determined to study and work hard to be able to reach my dream. I really appreciate The ILC and America!

My name is **Theva Rajkumar** and I am from Sri Lanka. My home town is Jaffna in Sri Lanka and I currently live in Melrose with my husband. I am studying ESL Level 5 and I also volunteer in Mr. Gedeus’ literacy class at The ILC. I enjoy studying and working at The ILC with my fellow students and staff. The teachers here are very helpful and treat us in a friendly manner. They do a lot to motivate the students and promote their self-confidence. I like to have a simple and respectable life so I want to speak English very well. Ever since I joined The ILC I can speak and understand better. I can talk with the doctor, bank teller, and insurance company agent. I can apply for my U.S. citizenship in two years. I love America and its people!

My name is **Silvia Umana.** I am from El Salvador. I, like all immigrants who come to this country, have dreams and goals we want to accomplish. The biggest obstacle is that we don’t speak English. This is the reason I am studying at The ILC. This is a bridge to reach my goals. The ILC is an excellent institution with excellent teachers who are helping me achieve my goals. This school woke up my feelings and gave me the confidence to pursue new goals in addition to learning English. I want to have new experiences and to be a successful person and have a better life so I can help form a better community and a better country.

My name is **Ligia Moreira Amorim.** I came to the U.S. from Brazil with my family for financial reasons and also with a dream of getting my children into a good university. This dream became true and we are now U.S. citizens. Today, this country has become our home for it embraced us giving us opportunities for great achievements. My goal now is to be here at The ILC learning English so that I may have the opportunity to work at an immigration lawyer’s office helping many, especially in the Latin community.

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**Notes from the Editors**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this ILC Student Newsletter 2013. We especially thank Diane, Jean and Mehrnoush for talking to us. Thanks, too, to all The ILC classes and to Cathy and Alison.
Popular Foods in Our Countries
By Morning Level 1 and Afternoon Level 1

BRAZIL
Feijoada (popular dish with beans and pork), barbecue, rice and beans

CHINA
vegetable dumplings, seafood, rice, noodles and duck

COLOMBIA
Bandeja Paisa (rice, beans, chorizo sausage, plantain, beef, pork, arepa and egg)

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
rice, beans, beef, chicken, fish and salad

EL SALVADOR
Pupusas (a favorite made with corn, beans, cheese and pork)

MOROCCO
Couscous made with meat, potatoes, cauliflower, tomatoes, onions and pumpkin

HAITI
rice, beans, seafood, goat, beef, pork and plantain

VIETNAM
rice, pork, fish and fresh vegetables

PERU
fish, vegetables and rice
Survey of Present Students’ Countries
By Morning Level 2

The students in the Morning Level 2 class reviewed the number of people from each country who go to school at The Immigrant Learning Center in the morning and afternoon classes. The ILC educates 439 students from 49 countries. People come from many countries to get jobs, feel safe and live in peace with their families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
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<td>Jordan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Health Tips by the Editors

Summer is nearing. As the weather gets hotter, there is more need to use deodorant. When we sweat, it is normal for an unpleasant smell to come from the armpits.

Washing your hands after arriving home, before eating and after using the bathroom diminishes the risk of contracting diseases.

Brush your teeth for two minutes. This will spare you time and money at the dentist, and your breath will smell better.
Things You Like and Things You Dislike by Morning Level 3

😊
living
red flowers
money
love
my family and they like me too
my country
romantic because I’m romantic
driving a car far away
my mom
eating
cleaning to make my house beautiful
sing and laughing
sharing my opinion
looking up words in the dictionary
taking pictures
cartoons that help you learn English
planting flowers in my yard
my boyfriend

WHAT DO YOU LIKE?

😊
getting up at 6:00 a.m
snow
too much working
winter
every war
fighting with people
fish’s fishy smell
men who have guns
I was held up at my job.
rude people
cooking because I’m tired and
afterward I’m more tired
watching boring soccer games on TV
Bananas make me sick.
long lines at the grocery store
cheeseburgers
tigers, cats, snakes and corn
no time for playing sports
chewy chicken

WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE?

Achieve Your Goals by Afternoon Level 5

Match the numbers on the left column with the letters on the right column

1. Keep on
2. Never
3. Go over
4. Count on
5. Start over
6. Look forward to
7. Put together
8. Hang in
9. Don’t run out of
10. Sign up for

a. your family
b. achieving your goals
c. there
d. a class
e. a plan
f. give up
g. energy
h. trying
i. your homework
j. again
What We Miss About Our Home Countries by Morning Level 4

We came to the USA hoping to find a better life, and in most cases our hopes were realized. However, we do miss many things about our home countries.

Of course, we miss our families and friends. How can we forget the friendly conversations and games we played together?

Another thing that most of us miss is the food of our countries. Although there is a great variety of food in American supermarkets, it doesn’t taste the same as at home, and sometimes it’s hard to find the right ingredients.

For many of us, especially for those who come from warm climates, Massachusetts weather isn’t very pleasant, especially in winter, when it’s cold, snowy and rainy.

And, last but not least, we miss our culture, music and language. Fluency in a language makes you feel confident and independent, and we hope that our studies at The ILC will help us achieve it.

Although we are homesick sometimes, we’re getting used to living in the USA, but we’ll never forget our home countries.

Advice for New Students to Improve Your English by The Immigrant Theater Group

* Watch movies and television in English. * Come on time every day.

* Listen to the radio in English. * Respect differences.

* Don’t laugh when someone makes a mistake * Practice your homework at home.

* Practice speaking with Americans. * Speak with students from different countries.

* Speak only English in class.

* Don’t be shy! * Only use your cell phone during breaks.

Be proud of yourself for working to make your English better!

The ILC is an excellent free school with a friendly staff and great teachers! Take advantage of it!
**Chores We Did in Our Childhood** by Family Literacy 3

In **Vietnam**: I used to help my family plant rice. We used to use a boat and a net to catch fish.

In **Ethiopia**: I used to plow the fields with two oxen and a wooden plow.

In **Turkey**: When I was twelve years old, I helped my parents cook, clean and wash dishes.

In **Algeria**: I helped take care of my siblings and washed clothes by hand.

In **Morocco**: When I was nine years old, I made bread dough and baked it. I fed the animals when I visited my grandfather’s farm. I helped my mother make homemade pasta and couscous.

In **El Salvador**: I took care of my siblings, washed clothes by hand and dried them on a clothesline with clothespins. I used to help my grandmother make bread in an outdoor oven. We used wood to make the oven hot. I collected wood from the forest to make the fire. As a teenager, I cooked ‘pupusas’ every day before school.

In **Haiti**: When I was a child in Haiti, I used to plant rice and carry water by hand. In Haiti I had to carry water to the house. I balanced it on my head. I used to cook rice, vegetables and plantains as a child in Haiti. When I was twelve, I started to help my parents. I cooked, made coffee, washed clothes by hand, fed the chickens and planted rice, beans and vegetables in the garden.

In **China**: I used to wash my own clothes by hand and take care of my siblings. Since I was twelve years old, I have washed my own clothes. I used to use a clothesline and clothespins to dry my family’s clothes. I used to bring soy sauce from the store to my mother. When I was twelve years old, I started to help my parents. I cooked, washed clothes, washed dishes and sometimes I fed the chickens.
“I got my first job as an accountant in Mongchen, China in 1974. I made budgets, applied for money from the government and balanced accounts. I liked my job because it was interesting.”

“I got my first job as a ground crewman in the Vietnamese Air Force in DaNang Airport, Vietnam from 1970 to 1975. I delivered material for airplanes and I always completed my mission.”

“I got my first job as a seamstress in Port-au-Prince, Haiti in 1964. I made pants, dresses, skirts, shirts and pajamas.”

“I got my first job as a beverage worker in Taishan, China in 1985. I mixed all kinds of materials and checked the quality of sugar, dye, water and preservatives. This was very interesting.”

“I got my first job in 1970. I worked on a farm in Usultan, El Salvador. Some people liked to work on a farm. I planted corn, rice and tomatoes.”

“I got my first job as a bagger in a supermarket in Içara, Santa Catarina, Brazil in 1979. I bagged purchases at checkout and helped customers put bags in their cars.”

“In the city of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in the year 2005, I got my first job as clothing merchant. I bought clothes and resold them after.”

“I got my first job as a baker in a big bakery in Casablanca, Morocco in 2007. I made cake, biscuits, sandwich bread and prepared cakes for New Year’s. Sometimes, I cooked special food for tourists. I felt happy when I saw my work.”

“I got my first job as a worker in a garment factory in Casablanca, Morocco in 2004. I bought cosmetic products from other business women in the Dominican Republic. When I came back, I distributed them to my customers at cheap prices. I liked my job because we had really good ideas together.”

“I got my first job as an assistant electrical engineer in Shenzen, China in 1990. I designed all kinds of systems for buildings: light systems, power systems, fire alarm systems etc. Then, I drew blueprints.”


“I got my first job as a life guard in Tehran, Iran in 2003. I watched over old people and children that couldn’t swim well. It was interesting and very difficult because if I wasn’t careful, people could drown.”

“I got my first job as a waiter in Hue, Vietnam in 2008. I liked this job because I could learn a lot about food and drinks.”

“I got my first job as a food service worker at McDonald’s in Boston, USA. in 2008. I prepared food, made sandwiches and put together orders. I liked my job because the schedule was very good for me.”
One day someone asked me for directions. I thought he asked me for the train station. Five minutes later he came back and said to me “Are you crazy, man? I asked you for the police station, and you showed me the train station.”

One day I saw a free table on the street and I wanted to take it home at once. The table was very heavy and the weather was hot. It was difficult for me, so I put it down and then I kicked it. A woman driving by saw me and then she drove me home.

I had never seen snow before and when I woke up the first thing I did was look out our window. I was very happy to play in the snow.

When I arrived at the airport I was at Immigration for a long time, however I had another plane connection to Boston. I was afraid to miss the second flight. Nobody understood me. I ran with my baggage. Finally, I found my gate and I was happy.

My flight was very late. I thought I missed the connection. The people in customs threw out my mushrooms, ginger, antibiotics and alcohol. After that, when I arrived outside I saw my husband waiting for me. The police officer gave him a 50 dollar ticket.

I wanted to call my sister but I didn’t have a phone card. My husband said I needed to go and buy one. I didn’t know how to get one. After that, I went to the store and just pointed with my finger. When I turned around I saw a lot of people looking at me.

When I came to the USA, I was sitting in the car and I saw a sign outside that said ‘SALEM.’ I read s-a-l-e-m. My husband smiled and said, “Don’t say s-a-l-e-m. They say ‘SALEM.’” Now I know how to pronounce the name.

When I ordered french fries at Dunkin Donuts they said “We don’t have french fries!” I asked my son to order other foods. My son said, “No! No! No!” Then I tried again and said to the seller “I know the food is a small circle and made with potato, but I don’t see the food behind the counter. Finally they showed us hash browns and we said “Yes! Yes! Yes!”

At work a customer gave me five dollars. I gave him the change. When I closed the register he told me he gave me fifty dollars! My manager opened the register and I saw a fifty dollar bill in the five dollar case. I said I’m sorry to the customer.

First of all, I studied English at the Ferry School. On the first day the teacher asked me, “What’s your last name and what’s your first name?” I didn’t understand last name and first name. It made the class laugh.

I didn’t speak English. Everyone was at work all day and I didn’t want to sit in the house all the time alone. After awhile I tried to take the bus by myself and I got lost. Then I asked people where to take the bus and they told me, “You are at the bus stop!”

I needed a restroom but I didn’t know the word. I asked someone “Where is the WC?” The man said “What is it? I don’t know.” I said “That thing on the wall, you can take out your water in it.” The man laughed and said “Oh, I see, you want the restroom.”

When I first came to the U.S. it was summer. When the winter came it was cold. One morning when I got up and opened the door I saw the outside was all white. My brother told me it was snow. I had never seen snow before. It is beautiful.

After a medical examination at the hospital the doctor said, “You are allergic to the weather.” I was surprised because I thought he said water. I said, “Oh my God, I’m allergic to the water. What will I drink when I’m thirsty?”

My first shower in the U.S. was freezing! In my country the hot water and cold water run in the same faucet and it is always the same. Here no one told me that there were two different faucets. I put on the cold water and I jumped and I got very cold.

I was in front of a tree and the child’s mother said, “Look at the bug, it’s a ladybug!” I saw it and said, “They don’t have “boysbug”?” They laughed aloud. I was serious because I didn’t understand. Years later I remember this funny story and I laugh!

When I felt hungry, I went to the bakery, but I didn’t wait in the line, I just went to talk to the cashier. The cashier said, “Can you go in the people line?” I said, “OK, yes” but I didn’t know what that meant. When she said it three times, someone did sign language and then I understood! I was shy and had a red face.

When I first came to this country I needed to take the “T” every day. Before the Charlie Card I needed to pay with exact money. Sometimes I didn’t pay because I didn’t understand anything the bus driver said to me. The bus driver shouted at me to move.

When I arrived at the police station, and you showed me the train station.

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How Big is Your N-Print
by Afternoon Level 4

The students in the afternoon Level 4 class studied about carbon and nitrogen footprints during the winter session. What is a nitrogen footprint? Your nitrogen footprint is the “mark” that you leave on the earth in the form of pollution! Humans produce nitrogen when they raise animals for food, drive cars, and make things in factories. Too much nitrogen is harmful to humans! It causes water pollution, makes breathing difficult, and even causes birth defects! If you want to find out how much nitrogen your activities produce, you can go online to www.N-print.org and use the nitrogen calculator. To reduce nitrogen pollution, we all have to reduce waste, reuse things for different purposes, and recycle our paper, glass, and metal.

Level 4 Will Reduce! Reuse! Recycle!

I plan to reduce by not cooking too much food and by not wasting food.          Roshi

I plan to recycle by taking all of my old TV, radio, and CD player to the city’s recycling plant.  Ali

I plan to reduce by saving energy, turning off everything that consumes electricity whenever it is not in use.          Herby & Jessica

I plan to reduce by saving water in our household and place of work by turning off the faucet.          Rose

I plan to reuse by making an old watch box into a jewelry box.          Ligia

I plan to reuse rain water by irrigating the garden with it.          Leticia

I plan to reduce by using a bike either to go to school or work.          Marcel

I plan to reduce by using my old clothes until they are worn out instead of buying new ones.          Dione

I plan to reduce the amount of my utility cost by using solar cell equipment, rechargeable batteries, and washing only full loads of clothes or dishes.          Hamid

I plan to reuse by transforming old silver spoons into a fish-shaped wind chime!          Vincenza

I plan to reuse by using soup cans to make my hair puffy.          Khadija

I plan to recycle my old clothes and books when I donate them to charity.          Asmaa
Women’s Opportunities and Roles from Different Countries and What We Are Reading

By Literacy Group

**Ethiopia** Ethiopian men and women were not equal...In the new generation, men and women are almost equal. Women have more of a chance to study, can work and can vote. Men have more respect for women.

**Vietnam** Women in my country go to college and have businesses. Thirty years ago, women didn’t work in jobs outside of the home. I know because my mom and grandmother told me that. Before, women only stayed home and took care of the house and children or did jobs like housekeeping or sewing.

**Haiti** In Haiti, women can do everything. Women go to high school and many go to college. In college, women can study any major they want. Many women work outside the home at any job they want. One of the first women everyone in Haiti gave respect to was Catherine Flon. She sewed Haiti’s first flag on May 18, 1803, when Haiti became independent. On March 13, 1990, Ertha Pascal-Trouillot became Haiti’s first female president. As a provisional president, she oversaw the country’s change to democracy and Haiti’s first truly free elections.

Before becoming president, Pascal-Trouillot was Haiti’s first female lawyer and its first female Supreme Court judge. Now women can do everything in Haiti. Many women are candidates for senator, etc. and work in the government. But it is still easier for men to get a job.

**Peru** In Peru, in the past, women stayed at home and took care of their family. Women studied in middle school, high school and university. When a woman was single she worked but when she was married she didn’t work. Now it is a good life. Every woman is happy because we have independence.

**Somalia** In Somalia, it is difficult for women because of the civil war. A few women worked as a nurse or a teacher. They could get married and take care of a home and family. They go to school. Few women go to college. Women run businesses. Most women stay home and cook and clean. In Somalia, women do not work in the government.

**Morocco** A long time ago in Morocco, some women stayed at home to take care of their family, but a lot of women learned to read and write. They could be teachers, doctors, scientists, lawyers, justices, etc. They could do every job. Women can drive cars and trains and airplanes, everything. Example: in the city of Fez, Morocco, a woman founded the first university in the world. Fatima al-Fihri founded the University of Al Karaouine in 859. In Morocco, women are equal with men.

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**What We Are Reading**

We are reading *The Home of the Brave*. It is a book about Kek who is a little boy from Sudan in East Africa. He came to the USA because many people were fighting in his country.

Kek came to the USA by an airplane, which he called “a flying boat.” It was winter and he saw snow for the first time. He called it an “unkind blanket of white.” We are from Haiti and Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, the snow looks like ice. In America, it looks like cotton. In Haiti, we never saw snow. The first time we saw snow, we liked it. But it was cold with no coat. Like Kek, we didn’t know anything about snow.

Kek didn’t know anything about the USA. Everything was new for him. But one thing was not new for him. It was a cow. Kek was very happy when he saw a cow. Cows were very important for Kek’s family because they give milk. Cows are very important in Ethiopia and Haiti also. In Haiti, we use them for milk. In Ethiopia, they give milk, meat, skin, and they plow the land.

Kek came to the USA with no parents, brothers or sisters. His father and brother were killed in Sudan. His father would make songs for Kek and his brother. The night before his father was killed he sang Kek’s favorite song. This song said that his father believed in him. No one knew where Kek’s mother was but Kek believed that she was still alive and would come to him. He never lost hope.