New American Stories
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Your support and their commitment

A student's last day at The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. is often bitter sweet. On the one hand, it represents the life-changing achievement of learning English. On the other hand, it means leaving behind fellow students and teachers that have become like family.

A few continue their connection to the school by coming back and volunteering in the classrooms under the direction of ILC teachers. This way, they continue to hone their English skills and help other newcomers like themselves succeed. Some of these students-turned-volunteers are profiled below.

On a related note, many of our volunteers and other supporters helped us to get a top rating in 2012 on the website Great Nonprofits. Feedback from supporters like you is very important to us. We need 10 more positive reviews to keep our top rated status in 2013. To see what others have written and add your own comments, please go to http://greatnonprofits.org/reviews/profile2/immigrant-learning-center-inc.

Thank you for your continued support.

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

Pierre says the same thing many ILC students say: he left his home country of Haiti so that his children could have a brighter future in the U.S. His son and daughter are both thriving here, and his daughter even tutors her classmates in math.

Even though his only English lessons had been two half-hour classes per week through a program at his son's school before starting at The ILC in January 2011, Pierre moved up to the highest level class and performed with The ILC Theater Group less than two years later in December 2012. He says the play was not that much of a stretch for him because he wrote and produced his own plays in his younger days in Haiti.

Currently, Pierre works at Whole Foods in the afternoons and volunteers with the lowest skilled literacy students at The ILC in the morning. In Haiti, Pierre taught high-school-level social studies and physics. He would love to return to his teaching career some day, but for now enjoys the chance to help other immigrants while he supports his family as best he can.

**Tammy**

In 1978, Tammy followed her older brother from war-torn Vietnam to Canada. She worked and lived with others from Vietnam and did not have an opportunity to learn English.

There, she met her husband who, unlike Tammy, was fortunate enough to have completed high school in Vietnam where he learned some English. They have four children: two sets of twins. Tammy had to rely on her English-speaking husband and children for many day-to-day tasks.

In 2002, the family moved to the United States to maximize the children's educational opportunities. Tammy found The ILC and finally had the chance to learn English. She left the Literacy Program in the fall of 2012 and almost immediately began volunteering. She loves helping newcomers with lessons that used be hard for her but now seem easy.

Her children have also thrived. The youngest two are still in high school. Her oldest son is studying computer engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and her oldest daughter is attending Bryn Mawr on a full scholarship with plans to become a dentist.

**Hifonia**

Hifonia had a difficult childhood in Haiti and feels blessed for the life she's made in the U.S. Her mother died when she was an infant, and she was raised by her aunt. There are no free schools in Haiti, so Hifonia did not attend school. Instead, she stayed home and helped the family.

When she married in 1982, her husband was already living in the U.S. Hifonia split her time between Haiti and America for a few years before finally settling here. Although she knew no English, she easily found work in housekeeping at Boston-area hotels while she and her husband raised their four sons.
In 2001, Hifonia had the first operation on her knee. It was apparent she would no longer be able to do physically demanding work. The Meridian Hotel offered her office work, but her English and computer skills were not good enough. Soon after that, she started studying at The ILC. In 2004, with the help of her ILC teachers, she became a U.S citizen. In 2012, Hifonia went from student to teacher's assistant when she started volunteering in the Literacy Program.

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."

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.