



442 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148  
Tel (781) 322-9777 Fax (781) 321-1963

*Diane Portnoy*  
*Director*

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 13, 2004**

**Contact: Kathy G. Smith**  
**(781) 322-9777**  
**ksmith@ilctr.org**

**GOVERNOR MITT ROMNEY VISITS ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM FOR IMMIGRANTS**  
*Witnesses Benefits of English Language Skills for Foreign-Born Massachusetts Residents*

**Malden, Mass** – The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) today hosted Governor Mitt Romney who took a “virtual tour” of the globe as he visited immigrant and refugee adults enrolled in The ILC’s adult literacy classes. Approximately 120 students from 43 countries greeted the Governor, some of whom shared their business, community and political experiences as newcomers to America. Governor Romney later addressed more than 80 of the Center’s supporters.

The focus of the Governor’s visit was to see first-hand how public and private investment in adult literacy programs enables immigrants and refugees to use their skills and talents in their new home and become assets to the Massachusetts economy, culture and the communities in which they live and work.

Founded in 1992, The ILC is a not-for-profit adult learning center that provides free classes to immigrant and refugee adults in English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, Family Literacy and Computer Literacy. Preparation for citizenship, GED (high school equivalency), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language required for college entry) and other professional exams is offered as well. The school is fully enrolled with 380 students and has a wait list of more than 900 individuals. Since its inception, The ILC has served more than 3,200 individuals from 65 countries, living in 58 Greater Boston communities, and who speak 40 different first languages. The ILC is supported by tax-deductible charitable contributions and, in part, by funding from the Massachusetts Department of Education, other government agencies and the private sector. The ILC admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion, or disability.

“Immigrants are one of America’s greatest assets, and they continue to positively impact the Massachusetts and national economies as business owners, homeowners, taxpayers, consumers and workers,” said ILC Co-Founder and Director, Diane Portnoy.

“One of the cornerstones of Governor Romney’s agenda is education, which includes adult literacy. His presence here today shows his commitment to the work we do at The ILC and his support of our students who want and need to learn English to achieve their goals and dreams. It is very meaningful to us when government leaders meet face-to-face with these hardworking men and women who bring incredible gifts, talents and other contributions to our communities. Their aspirations are similar to those of native-born Americans who strive to create opportunities and a prosperous life for themselves and their families.”

To further help foreign-born adults transition successfully into American life and culture, The ILC launched The Public Education Program to raise awareness about the many ways immigrants make vital contributions to the economic, social and cultural vibrancy of America. The Program’s four components include educational forums for K-12 teachers on Teaching Immigration Across the Curriculum, which will be developed and delivered through a partnership with the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants.

The ILC is also partnering with the Institute for Asian-American Studies and the Gaston Institute at the University of Massachusetts-Boston on a business sector study about immigrant entrepreneurs and their impact on neighborhood revitalization. Additionally, stories about the immigrant experience are being dramatized by ILC students through The ILC’s Immigrant Theater Group that performs in the community and on cable television. The last component involves a future newspaper series that will frame immigrant stories within employment and economic statistics to help dispel myths about immigrants and the burden of immigration in the U.S.

###