

Giving Immigrants a Voice

FALL 2018

You gave him a helping hand, and he reached back

Your support touches many lives. Although students come to The Immigrant Learning Center to help themselves, they are also helping their families and sometimes each other.



After being hired at the airport, Wallas helped other students apply.

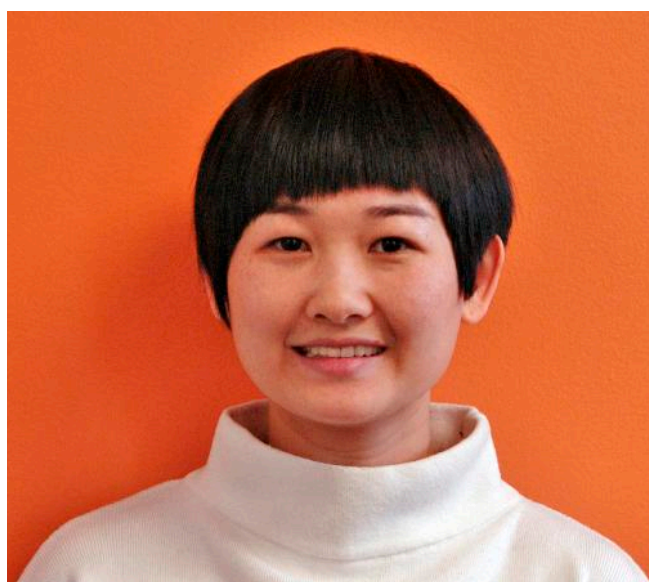
After the earthquake in Haiti, Wallas worked for an international organization helping disabled people. He came to the United States seeking a brighter future in 2016. When he arrived, Wallas knew so little English that he had to ask a French speaker to help him find the exit at the airport. He came to The ILC in 2017, and he humbly says, “Now I can understand. I can speak a little bit.”

Wallas’ first job in the U.S., like many immigrants, was at Garden State preparing packaged salad mixes. He wanted a job where he could interact with more Americans and learn more English. His friend helped him apply for a job in baggage handling at Boston Logan airport. He was hired there last fall and shortly after got a weekend job at Walnut Street Center working with developmentally disabled adults.

Just as a friend helped Wallas, Wallas told other ILC students about jobs at the airport. He even drove a couple of them to the airport to apply. One of them was Gracie. She had been working in a bakery in Chinatown and also wanted to improve her English by working with Americans. She came to the U.S. from China in 2016 with her infant daughter to join her husband who had been here since 2011.

In order to get hired as an aircraft cleaning attendant, Gracie had to pass background checks, interviews and a written exam. In March, when she received her new employee ID, she described the event as “very moving.” She comes to The ILC from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and works from 2:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. If a plane is late, she can be there until midnight.

Gracie is very grateful for the opportunity your support provides. “I love the life here. I like to study English. At home when I have free time, I study. I get a new job, I study more.”



Gracie is happy to have a new job at the airport where she can practice her English.

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Going the distance

Ever since The Immigrant Learning Center opened its doors in 1992, there have been newcomers anxious to learn English that need to wait for a seat in one of our classes. Likewise, since that first day, we have been looking for cost-effective ways to help as many immigrants and refugees as we can. Thanks to generous supporters, we have two new programs that are leveraging technology to give prospective students on the wait list a head start.

Both the Distance Learning Group and the Peer-to-Peer Learning Circle meet once a week and take advantage of online learning opportunities in the computer lab. The main difference between the two is that Distance Learning students commit to five hours of additional study at home each week. Both groups meet for an hour in the classroom to work on conversation and grammar, and another hour in the computer lab reviewing exercises from USA Learns. At the end of the session, these students enter the appropriate class at The ILC.

These programs are helping people improve their English while they wait for a seat in class. It also gives them strategies and study skills to learn on their own so that they show up ready to take full advantage of their class.



Students on the wait list get a head start in the Distance Learning Group and Peer-to-Peer Learning Circle.

Double your impact!

a Voice
#GIVINGTUESDAY
NOVEMBER 27, 2018

You can make your gift go further on Giving (a Voice) Tuesday because an anonymous donor will match your contribution dollar for dollar. Contributions from new donors will be matched two to one, so this is a great time to share your enthusiasm for The ILC with your friends. Created as a response to commercialization and consumerism in the post-Thanksgiving season, GivingTuesday is a global day of giving celebrated in 90 countries. Be on the lookout for our posts on Twitter and Facebook, and go to www.ilctr.org/givingtuesday to make your donation.

Educating for the future



Director of The ILC Public Education Institute Denzil Mohammed talks to fifth-graders at the Park School, Brookline, about the contributions of immigrants.

Children of all backgrounds are the future of our country. If the next generation of leaders knows the facts about immigrants, their contributions and the qualities they bring, we are likely to all have a more tolerant place to live. The ILC Public Education Institute has been impacting more children in Massachusetts and across the country through increased demand for workshops with students, professional development trainings for teachers and conference presentations. Recently, the Institute worked with Brookline Public Schools, Boston Public Schools / Boston Public Library, the Literacy Texas coalition and a variety of educator conferences. Educators attending The ILC Public Education Institute's trainings walk away with the latest tools and best practices for ensuring the success of their immigrant students and creating classroom environments that welcome and support everyone.

Expanding your reach

Webinars from The ILC Public Education Institute are garnering increasing acclaim and national attention. With your support, the Institute has reached more than 8,000 people from 49 states since 2012. Each webinar features experts from diverse disciplines presenting best practices and exploration of replicable case studies while interacting with immigrant- and refugee-serving professionals from all parts of the U.S. These free workshops have been met with an enthusiastic and grateful response for fulfilling a unique role in the field and presenting topics that require greater attention. Recent topics include:

- Local Action: New Strategies to Build United Communities (in collaboration with the Institute for Immigration Research at George Mason University)
- Tackling the Hidden Crisis: Immigrant Anxiety and Trauma
- Immigrant Student Success: Strategies and Tools for K-12 and Adult Educators (offered annually)
- Making Facts Matter: Immigrants, the Economy and Words that Work



The 823 registrants for the free webinar Tackling the Hidden Crisis: Immigrant Anxiety and Trauma hailed from 45 states and the District of Columbia.

New American voices

Even though immigration is a large part of our history and culture, immigrant stories tend to be underrepresented in publishing. To elevate the profile of immigrant story tellers and recognize their recently published works, the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture between George Mason University and The Immigrant Learning Center, created the New American Voices Award. Out of 24 entries from across the country, three finalists were chosen. On Thursday, October 11, 2018, Diane Portnoy, founder and CEO of The ILC, announced the winner, Hernán Díaz, author of the novel *In the Distance*. The other finalists were Elena Georgiou, author of the story collection *The Immigrant's Refrigerator*, and Renee Macalino Rutledge, author of the fantastical book *The Hour of Daydreams*.



(From left to right) Nominees Renee Macalino Rutledge, Elena Georgiou and Hernán Díaz with The ILC Founder and CEO Diane Portnoy at the inaugural New American Voices award ceremony

Thank You Donors

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One year older and more ambitious

Alan Verly is an avid Facebook user. Last December, when he noticed Facebook added the ability to host fundraisers, he decided to dedicate his birthday to The Immigrant Learning Center. His friends were not surprised to see him raising money for The ILC. He is the director of The ILC Theater Program and has been a teacher at The ILC since 2016. Alan expressed his surprise at how easy it was, “I didn’t have to talk to anybody, people just donated. I have some generous friends.” He says the only downside was, “I wish I had set a higher goal.” Alan’s goal was \$200, and he raised \$230.

Why did he choose The Immigrant Learning Center for his birthday fundraiser? He says, “I believe in many causes, but I believe The ILC is a very worthy cause....

This particular mission has always been close to my heart. If both my parents [who are from Haiti] had been able to come to this school, they both would have benefited a lot from it. It’s one of the reasons I want to be here for many, many years.”



Alan Verly, director of The ILC Theater Program, enjoys dedicating his birthday to The ILC on Facebook.

Looking forward to his next birthday, Alan says, “I’m really excited about this year. I’m going to raise the goal.”

Filling a need and feeling fulfilled

Every Wednesday for the last two years, Rebecca Taplin has been coming to The Immigrant Learning Center to help students learn English. She started coming because, “There was a lot of talk against immigrants coming to our country, and I thought one of my ways to do something about it was to try to make immigrants feel more welcome.” Sadly, the “talk” about immigrants has not improved since 2016. This summer, Rebecca asked herself, “All the talk in our country about negative things about immigrants makes me want to continue to not just show up every week, but find other ways to help out. How can I make [more of] a difference?”

While Rebecca was looking for more ways to help, Trish Micheli, The ILC family literacy coordinator, was building up The ILC student library. The library was made up of donated books that The ILC students could borrow to read with their children. It didn’t take long before students without children also wanted to borrow books and practice reading English at home. Trish wanted to add a series of books from Pearson that have simple language, adult subject matter and come with CDs so students can improve reading and pronunciation.

Rebecca had been saving money every month for charity. She had amassed \$500 and loved the idea of



Volunteer Rebecca Taplin donated 20 books to The ILC student library.

buying these books because, “The stories are about grownups, not children’s stories. It provides a level of dignity.” She spent \$400 on 20 books, and donated a check for the remaining \$100.

The books are so popular that Trish says she can’t keep them on the self. They are always in circulation. Rebecca couldn’t be happier. “For me it felt so personal to be able to do this.... This is my way of having my voice heard. I’m going to put my time, energy and money into helping, into welcoming people into our country.”

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