

Malden residents recognized for their commitment to assist newcomers during immigration spike

MALDEN, Mass, June 3, 2024 / Volunteers from throughout Greater Boston were honored by Malden's The Immigrant Learning Center (The ILC) on Friday, May 31, 2024. The recent spike in newcomers to Massachusetts has put enormous pressure on free programs like The ILC that help immigrants and refugees learn English and job search and life skills so they can become productive members of Greater Boston communities.

The waiting list for classes is expected to surpass 2,000 people this summer for the first time in The Immigrant Learning Center's 31-year history. These volunteers are crucial supports for The ILC teachers trying to ensure all students' needs are met. Executive Director Vince Rivers explained the importance of volunteers and some of the recent changes, "Over the course of the last nine months we've made some significant changes to be able to help more students. We serve over 400 students today versus we were serving slightly over 300 in September. There are not 400 students in this building without you guys."

Once placed with a teacher, weekly volunteers spend up to three hours helping students learn grammar, reading, writing, communication, technology and work force development skills in English as well as prepare them for the U.S. citizenship exam and increase their understanding of American culture. Malden residents honored on Friday included Nancy Free, who has been a volunteer since 2015, Perry Cottrelle, since 2017, Joan Doyle and Kim Addison, who both joined in 2022, and Trish Micheli, who retired from The ILC in 2022 and volunteers as a substitute teacher. The ILC volunteers help students with a range of skills, from low literacy in their first languages to those with advanced degrees, to learn English and achieve goals such as finding a job, getting an education or becoming a U.S. citizen. As a result, immigrants and refugees are able to contribute more effectively to their new communities through economic, civic and cultural engagement.

New volunteers are always welcome. For more information about the volunteer program, contact Laura Straub at lstraub@ilctr.org or (781) 322-9777.

Photo Caption:

Front row, seated, left to right: Nancy Free, Elise Fahey, Marsha Adler and Joan Doyle

Middle row, left to right: Sandy Perkins, Kim Addison, Charlene Calahan, Andy Koppel, Lisa Grollman, and John and Joanne Harney

Back row, left to right: Trish Micheli, Jerry O'Connell, Mike Kiewra, Ellen Vargyas, Paul Jackson, Perry Cottrelle and Gene Moulton

About The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (The ILC) of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States, and the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, produces valid, reliable and objective multidisciplinary research on immigrants and immigration to the United States.

For more information, visit the website <http://www.ilctr.org>. The ILC can also be found on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

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