



English

Empowerment Center

Learn English. Change your life.



Learning English Changed My Life
Annual Recognition Ceremony 2023

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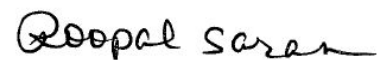
A Message from the Executive Director



The theme for this year's Annual Recognition Ceremony is "Learning English Changed My Life." For those who have walked the ESL path, there is gravity in this statement for sure. We know that learning English opens doors for our students as they can now apply for a job, talk to their children's teachers, vote with understanding, and make friends and exchange ideas with their neighbors. Every day, we see our students empowered by learning English. That is why, in November 2022, we changed our name to the English Empowerment Center. Thank you for your kind words and positive reactions to this big change; we have enjoyed teaching the meaning of the word "empower" to our students and every time I say it to myself, I smile and think about how their hard work to learn English will have positive ripple effects for them, their families, and the community for years to come.

This spring, we held our first ever Job and Opportunities Fair. We know these events are intimidating to native English speakers, let alone someone starting in their English journey. So, we created an event where each participant would be greeted when they entered and asked what they were looking for and we guided them to the 18 employers, training providers, social services, and college access programs in the room. We offered to review their resumes in advance of the fair and offered mock interviewing practice thanks to many who volunteered to help. We heard resounding enthusiasm for the event from the 150+ participants and intend to organize others like it. This year, we have seen a huge increase in demand for our classes. To meet this need, we increased our enrollment by 25%, with 18 in-person locations and about one-third of learners taking classes virtually. In order to serve these 1900+ students, volunteer recruitment and engagement continues to grow. Our staff met this challenge and continues to be recognized for excellence with our own Marizol Rojas, Student Liaison/Office Administrator, and Amy Tristan, Volunteer and Outreach Manager being recognized as Unsung Heroes in the February 2023 issue of PROGRESS, a publication of the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, for their expertise in making connections to students and volunteers and making them feel at home at English Empowerment Center. We are proud of the warm and welcoming environment we offer to all we come across and believe this is instrumental in making people want to keep coming back to learn and serve with us.

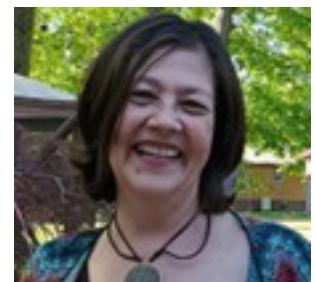
As always, we cannot do this work without the vital support we receive from our partners, volunteers, and donors. Your creativity, advice, positivity, and support make us stronger. Thanks to you, we can continue to strive to meet the needs of those who need our services because we know learning English can change their lives.



Roopal Mehta Saran
Executive Director,
English Empowerment Center

Guest Speaker: Patricia Moreno

Patricia Moreno is a native Colombian whose care for others fuels her work and advocacy. One of the community's most well-known and respected connectors, Patricia's outreach has opened doors for countless individuals and families to programs and resources that improve their health and wellness. "Meeting people where they are is what we do in public health. Whether I am at a neighborhood event providing education about Medicaid benefits or helping at local food distribution, each moment has endless possibilities to help others."



Patricia supports health education and promotes Medicaid awareness in Northern Virginia in her outreach role with Anthem Healthkeepers Plus. Working side-by-side with community-based organizations, Patricia fosters relationships and partnerships that have resulted in the development of numerous community programs and initiatives aimed at helping improve the health of those living in under-resourced communities.

Her work has earned her many accolades including the Washingtonian of the Year award in 2000 for her demonstrated leadership to establish the first Spanish speaking cancer support group in Northern Virginia – Todos Juntos, as well as the "Consumer Empowerment URAC Health Care Starts Award", the "The Public Health Specialist Dorland Health People Award", and the 2019 Above and Beyond Journey for Excellence Award for Anthem HealthKeepers Plus. But her biggest reward is to be able to share her love and passion for the community she serves.

About the English Empowerment Center

The mission of the English Empowerment Center (EEC) is to teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community.

Staff

Roopal Mehta Saran

Executive Director

Joshua Gilmore

Development Coordinator

Ashley King

Admissions Manager and Registrar

Michael Mahrer

Senior Director of Advancement

Xavier Muñoz

Director of Academic Programs and Student Services

Abdulkadir Mirze

IT Database Administrator

Sahra Nadiir

Financial and Operations Manager

Eiman Nimer

Intensive Program and Site Operations Manager

Soo H. Park

Instructional Design Manager

Juan Perez

Student Services Coordinator

Nada Raja

Academic Operations and Digital Literacy Manager

Melissa Rea

Faculty Support Manager

Marizol Rojas

Office Administrator and Student Liaison

Amy Tristan

Volunteer and Outreach Manager

Marin Uher

Communications Coordinator

Lisa Vaughn

Community and Donor Relations Manager



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Anupam Kumar

Vice President of Customer Experience, EVERFI

Nisha Kumar

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Carisa Pineda

Management Specialist, Arlington County Child Advocacy Center

Tiffany L. Taber

Chief Speechwriting and Managing Writer, U.S. Department of Education

John V. Thomas

Former Deputy General Counsel, retired Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

Community Partnership Awards

Each year, the English Empowerment Center recognizes a number of its partners for their consistent support of our programs and mission. This year, the English Empowerment Center is proud to recognize three outstanding partners.



Accenture is committed to making lasting change for business and communities and has partnered with EEC since 2013. Our relationship began when the Accenture team took an interest in EEC's Destination Workforce® program. It was just a vision then, but with Accenture's market research, vote of confidence and financial support, Destination Workforce® became a reality. Since our partnership started, Accenture has invested more than \$120,000 in EEC to offer essential language skills and workforce training to low-income immigrant adults so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community. In addition, they have offered expert pro bono support, playing a key role in EEC's strategic planning and rebrand. Accenture has also provided impactful leadership, most recently through their Managing Director and EEC Board Member, Michael Gavin. As Board President, Michael provides essential leadership to ensure that EEC's critical programs are high-quality, financially sustainable, effective, and affordable for our learners.



The Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) enhances the quality of life of southeast Fairfax County by providing food, basic needs, and self-sufficiency programming. Partnering with EEC for more than 16 years, together we have provided English language education to more than 1,300 immigrant adults in the Lorton region. In 2022, their collaboration was key in bringing English language programming to the new Lorton Community Center, and the trust they built in the community, their enthusiastic outreach, and their ongoing support have helped these classes to thrive. The work they do in Lorton affects so many, and EEC is proud to partner with LCAC to give families the resources and tools they need to meet their goals.



The Paul M. Angell Foundation promotes equitable, safe, and thriving communities, combating injustice and providing meaningful opportunities to resilient individuals and families. The Paul M. Angell Foundation was introduced to EEC through our long-time friend, former Director and Board President, Elsa Angell, whose legacy lives on in the lives of thousands of adults and families whose lives were changed through education. Since 2014, the Foundation has granted \$350,000 to EEC, empowering immigrant families to become active and engaged citizens, and to reach their personal goals. This investment has given EEC the ability to offer excellent, affordable, and accessible English language education to 1,500 adults each year, with more than 1,900 served in the 2022-2023 school year. Their partnership and commitment to this work has made an impressive difference in the community.

Volunteers of the Year

Stan Citron



Stan's journey with the English Empowerment Center started in 2014 when he was contemplating life after working as a lawyer. During his time in college, Stan spent a year living in France, allowing him to understand the bewilderment of living in a foreign country, but he also knew how rewarding it can be. He had never taught or even seen an actual adult English class but decided to take the plunge, fill out our volunteer application, and hasn't looked back since! For the past nine years, Stan has taught all three levels of EEC Beginning English classes, as well as our English for Work class. Stan is constantly working to improve and provide the best possible classes for his students. In 2016, he completed the NOVA Community College TESOL certificate program. When speaking on his work with English language learners, he says "My experience teaching at EEC has been satisfying on many levels. First, it has given me the opportunity to meet and work with students from all over the world and witness their growth as English speakers. Second, there has been the joy associated with developing and presenting engaging lesson plans for each class. Third, the EEC teaching experience has helped me to become a better lawyer by improving my writing, increasing my confidence as a public speaker, and making me more patient in day-to-day dealings with colleagues."

Jeanne noticed the growth of Fairfax County's English as a Second Language (ESL) population and shortage of teachers in the early 2000's. This inspired her to attend the University of Virginia to get her licensure in ESL. She then went on to teach English at Oakton High School and Hayfield Secondary School before retiring in 2019. Upon retiring, Jeanne wanted to continue supporting the ESL population and found the English Empowerment Center! She began her journey with us as a class aide for our Beginning English level 2 class. When the pandemic hit in 2020 and classes were converted to a virtual format, Jeanne continued to assist via Zoom. Since returning to in-person classes, she has continued as a class aide in the level 2 class. When asked about her experience, Jeanne shared, "Working with adults is so rewarding because they are actively engaged in bettering themselves and go to great lengths to do so while juggling family life and jobs. We had one student who spent the entire semester studying for her citizenship test. The test is quite difficult, however, she passed it and said it was her proudest moment. It was mine as well!" We are so lucky to have such a qualified and dedicated volunteer in Jeanne. Jeanne would like to share, "I hope I have made a difference in the many lives I have impacted, however I must say that I have benefited so much from my students. They have shared their culture, language, food, and customs and enriched my life."

Jeanne Johnson



Sarah Krisher



Sarah is currently a Senior Manager with Accenture Federal Services, where she supports federal organizations in furthering Innovation and Data & Analytics initiatives. She also has extensive experience serving nonprofits and NGOs, both in professional and volunteer capacities, and has served the English Empowerment Center specifically as the Accenture DC Metro Nonprofit Relationship Manager for 6+ years. Sarah was first introduced to EEC in 2017 and has been a volunteer ever since, including playing a crucial role in our strategic plan and rebrand strategy. She shares, "I realize how lucky I am to be born in a country whose main language is the most spoken global language, and it's easy to take the opportunities this opens up for granted. The work EEC does to upskill immigrant and refugee populations through English language education is crucial to not only opening up personal and professional opportunities for the learners and their families, but also greatly enriches our communities and local economies by enabling pathways for increased engagement in a multitude of ways." Sarah highlighted that you get more than language education when you come to EEC—you get the supportive community and culture that comes with it. When asked what she enjoys about working with the English Empowerment Center, Sarah says, "EEC has one of the most special communities I've experienced in any organization. No matter who you talk to, the people within and who surround the organization are just truly some of the most kind and intelligent people that leave you feeling inspired and ready to take anything on."

Volunteer Milestones

20 Year Anniversary

Glenn Allen | Stefanie Carr | Maryanne Knockenhauer

15 Year Anniversary

Veronica Cartier | Shelley Deutch | Betsy Mitchell
Jeffrey Randorf | David Webber

10 Year Anniversary

Liz Castillo | Michelle DiRenzo | Janice Lloyd
Bruce Miller | Dahlia Orleans-Pobee
Alberta Seith | Robert Sutter

5 Year Anniversary

Eric Ackerman | William Angley | Oana Antony
Zenaida Bastidas De Pacheco | Alessandra Bono Figliuoli
Krista Carlson | Marie Cavanaugh | Daniel Clancy
Sherri Coles | Betsy Culbertson | Bo Davis
Shirley Doswell Lori Farnsworth | Tom Gilbride
Ajmal Khan | Janice Linett | Timothy McKenzie
Michele McNabb | Jane Price | Nancy Rottenecker
Karen Schroth | Lynn Shotwell | Anna Slomovic
Shannon Smith | Tammi Souza | Nathan Telaraja
Bradley Tobias | Daphne Van Tiem | James Wallar

400+ Hours of Service, 2022-2023

Molly Bensinger-Lacy | Maura Sleevi
Cynthia Steffens | Loren Zander

300+ Hours of Service, 2022-2023

Ann Anderson | Jan Auerbach | Laurie Hayden
Maryanne Knockenhauer | Kathleen McCleary
Valerie Sutter

200+ Hours of Service 2022-2023

Zenaida Bastidas De Pacheco | Stacey Becker
Krista Carlson | Stan Citron | Susan Clayman
Ida Draim | Marcia Dursi | Connie Hauer
Linda Johnsen | Eva Kaplan | William Meara
Mary Ellen Mehler | Sandra Olson
Elizabeth Stone | Jody Sweet | Rawa Zaid

100+ Hours of Service, 2022-2023

Glenn Allen | William Angley | Christopher Axarlis
Brian Brooks | Veronica Cartier | Grace Castillo
Marie Cavanaugh | Rachel Clark | Henry Collins
Christine Davey | Astrid Dejesus Rivera
Madeline Delahan | Leo Dillon | Gulipali Duolikun
James Falcone | Lori Farnsworth | Linton Favours
Nan Fife | Glen Finland | Ameer Ghaderi | Gail Gile
Adam Hayes | Amira Ibrahim | Susan Jacob
Diane Jensen | Jeanne Johnson | Karen Leckie
Janice Linett | Robin Lundgren | Natasha Marple
Mary Anne McDonald | Jane Michaels
Elizabeth Nelson | Janet Pauling | Lindsay Peter-Thomas
Raj Richardson | Karen Schroth | Kate Suryan
Robert Sutter | Jane Taylor | Nathan Telaraja
Marie Tibor | Kathleen Utgoff | Scott Vickland
Debra Willen

Want to learn more about volunteering with the English Empowerment Center?
Contact volunteers@EnglishEmpowermentCenter.org or call (703) 237-0866 x116

Lead Teachers

We would like to offer our appreciation to EEC's Lead Teachers. The positive influence they have on our learners and our community at large is immeasurable. Thank you to all of our wonderful instructors!

Nadin Al-Attar
Dr. Banhi Bhattacharya
Lorraine Billo
Kobi Carter
Jinfeng Cheng
Jackie Corkins*
Vaishali Deshpande*
Darlene Fahrenkrug
Donna Giarratana
Adrienne Grossman*

Matthew Halse
Laurie Hayden**
Katarzyna Helbin-Travis
Jennifer Hine
Claire Kevill
Cassandra Kramer
John Koubaroulis
Eman Mahmoud
Alison McGandy
Roshan Nawid

Elizabeth Nelson****
Stacy O'Connor
Elizabeth Quillin
Jackie Park*
Jennifer Pryor-Abraham
Dr. Serpil Seyhan
Mirna Solis***
Todd Stone
Lisa Trangsrud*
Allison Widmann
Mary Wilson

*5 or more years of service

**10 or more years of service

***15 or more years of service

****20 or more years of service

Learning English Changed My Life: Student Essays

English Empowerment Center learners were invited to submit writings around our theme for this year's Annual Recognition Ceremony, Learning English Changed My Life. Learners worked with instructors and classmates to formulate ideas, construct drafts, and edit their writing in order to create the final products contained here. The ideas and opinions contained in this publication are those of the learner and do not necessarily reflect those of EEC or its partners. It is our hope that these essays give you a sense of how learning English has helped EEC learners provide for their basic needs, create connections, and find opportunities to thrive within their communities.

Student Essay Spotlight



Reojin Ko
South Korea



Martha Molina
El Salvador



Rose Nguyen
Vietnam

Reojin Ko

The More Learning, The Better Life

Before I learned English in the U.S.A., I felt English was not necessary in my life. Although I had studied English when I was young, I couldn't speak English well.

However, when I came to the U.S.A. 3 months ago, I needed to speak English. At that time, I had to register my older son in elementary school, and my younger son is in preschool. I used English only for reading in Korea, but I was not familiar with how to speak or write. I had trouble with speaking and writing in English, so I was frustrated in the U.S.A.. Especially because I'm the only one who must communicate with native English speakers about my children's education, it was very stressful. I tried to find a way to improve my English, and I found it. It's at the "English Empowerment Center". Since taking English class, I have had more practice in English conversation and writing. I met a lot of friends in my class, and I can talk to them. Also, I can talk to the teacher in English. It makes me more confident. Especially "e-mail writing" was particularly helpful, I feel more comfortable writing better with my son's teachers.

Learning English has allowed me to express myself better in many situations. I can now talk with my son's teacher and friends who speak English, which has opened up new opportunities for me. I feel more connected to the world and can understand different cultures. Sometimes speaking English is not easy, but I enjoy learning English. Now that I speak English, I feel proud and accomplished. I hope to speak English more fluently some day. I will do my best to continue to improve my English. I'm more willing to take on new challenges and opportunities. I recommend the "English Empowerment Center" to anyone looking to improve their communication skill and writing in English.

Martha Molina

English Opens Doors

I have advice about how you can survive as an Immigrant single mom in the U.S.. One of the requirements is English. For me, learning English changed my life. Before learning English, I felt scared, alone, and sometimes lost. Also, I could not order food in restaurants. This feeling is the same for a lot of people in the U.S.. By learning English, I can have a better job. I can be involved with neighbors and new friends. English opened for me the door to a new world, and a new view of life.

Now that I speak English, I feel more confident day by day.

I feel, I have the possibility to be what I want, and now with English I make sure it will happen.

I hope English continues opening doors for me and others.

Rose Nguyen

Before learning English, I really felt bad. I always needed help. I did not understand when someone was speaking to me. I was upset with myself, and when I went anywhere, I was scared. I could not call my son's doctor, when he got sick. I could not help my children with their homework. I could not talk to my son's teacher. When they got in trouble, I could not participate with my neighbor. I just said "Hi" to them only. I was very quiet in my job because I did not know [how] to speak.

Since taking English class, I felt independent. I found an English class for myself. Before, my son has helped me. I made a lot of new friends in my class. I learned basic computer [skills]. But I was just one of the lower people in my computer class. I can do everything. I am happy.

By learning English, now I can talk to my clients when I am working. I can go to see my doctor by myself. I can help my children with their homework. I can go to D.M.V. to get a driver's license. I can pay my bills. I can participate in any program. I can vote for my president.

By learning English, I can be involved with conversations in any meeting program. I want to go to my children's school. I want to communicate with people at work, with my neighbor, and in my community. Now that I speak English, I feel confident. Anyway, I want to say thank you to all of my teachers. They spent much time for us. I promise I will do my homework and I want to improve my English in the future. Thank you.

Student Essays

Desta Abreha

Learning English has changed my pronunciation. I try to write English words perfectly now that I can understand when someone speaks the English language. Specifically, now my boss and I can understand each other. After I took the English language class, I am able to read books. When I started the English language learning I was very happy and I want to give a good rating for my teachers.

When I started the English class, I felt good that I improved so many things.

Alexia Acho

English changed my life in my family environment. Learning English changed my circle of friends that I have now, friends who only speak English. It changed my life because now I speak two languages and I can develop more. I[t] changed my life because now I can help other people a little, who do not know English. It changed my life in this country because I can communicate a little in supermarkets. It changed my life because I can communicate with other people from other countries that the only language that I don't hear is English. My life changed because I was able to graduate from the university in Peru because they asked me to learn another language.

I love the language and I would love to learn to speak more. English is a very potential language. Learn as if you were to live forever.

Learn English to get a good job. I can communicate more with my cousins who speak English perfectly. I speak English better now! You did it!

English Education strengthens you to communicate more at work here in the United States. Speaking English here is very important. A different language is a different vision of life.

"By learning English, I can be involved in more conversations with people at work, neighbors and in my community. Now that I speak English, I feel good and comfortable with people."

-Mohamed A., EEC Learner

Mohamed Ahmed



Before learning English, I felt many times in made sentences, I mean in conversations with people. Since taking English classes, I have found a new job, made new friends, learned new technologies, and helped my child learn from home. By learning English, now I can state my opinions, share my traditions, communicate at work and with my child's school, and pay my own bills. By learning English, I can be involved in more conversations with people at work, neighbors and in my community. Now that I speak English, I feel good and comfortable with people.

Ali Al Shafei

When I first came to the U.S. I couldn't speak English and didn't understand what they were saying. Without English I can't understand anything. Learning English has helped me with my work. English also helped me with understanding people when they talk.

Muna Ali



The English class helps me to learn English. My life has changed after coming to the class. I am very happy studying English because I need it for my work. Also, I can help my children in my home. When I finish this course, I will go to NOVA to study information technology. My EEC class has been a good opportunity for me.

Tahani Ibrahim Alsulami

Before I spoke English, I didn't understand parts of the conversations. When listening it was like a jumble. When I first came to the United States I was shy when speaking, because I expected everyone to speak English. Without English I can't reach my dream. Now that I am learning English I can help my children study. English helps me to help myself and I made new friends. Learning English has changed my life because in the future I will go to a university for a Masters degree.

Carmen Alvarez

My life changed. I can speak more English with my children. Now I understand my boss and my co-worker.

Vaneza Alvarez

Before I learned English, I felt very sad, because I was scared to speak or ask questions to anybody. When I went to work as a housekeeper with my boss, I didn't understand the conversation between the people and my boss, and all the time she had to repeat to me what to do. I didn't understand at all because they spoke very fast. Then I found another job, and I said in my interview that my English was not good. They understood me, but they told me that I have to try English classes.

Since taking English class, my English is much better. I can understand any conversations now. My boss has told me that now she can tell me more things to do.

By learning English, I can now speak with my children's teacher. I can make an appointment at the hospital, and I can speak a little with my neighbors. Now that I speak English, everything is easier. I can go outside and be happy. I can do more things for my family.

Jorge Amador

It helps me to speak with my co-workers. I'm involved with my neighbors. I help my son with his homework.

Fatema Amiryar

My name is Fatima. I am from Afghanistan. I am an engineer. I was a professor at Kabul Mechanical Institute. Ten months ago I came to America. Before I came to America I didn't know English. Now I want to learn English to find a job and communicate with everybody. Fortunately now I can write, read and a little speak in English. Before learning English I felt alone. I was able to get my driver's license a few months ago. Fortunately I have a great English teacher and she works hard with us to learn English. I appreciate her hard work.

Volodymyr Antonenko

Communication is one of the most important achievements of mankind. And it's very hard to lose this advantage when you are in a new country. A country, whose language you do not speak. You find yourself in an information vacuum, overboard of a full-fledged life. You are helpless as a child. As you learn English, you seem to be reborn and grow up. Your life is filled with colors and make sense again. You have prospects at work, you have a better rest and communicate. For example, I am thankful for my level of knowledge of English. I have already found a good job. And this is just the beginning. We learn to live in a new country, and everyday is better and more meaningful for us.

Ruth Ardaya

I like learning English at James Lee. I made new friends. I can communicate at work. I can be involved in more conversations. I am learning English because I want to become citizen. I can apply for a new job.

Luisa Arece Canaviri



Before learning English, I felt frustrated. I couldn't communicate with anyone or get anywhere. After taking English classes for four months, I learned greetings, numbers, and places. I can speak at a basic level but I can't pronounce correctly.

Through learning English, I can get involved in my work and serve people.

I work in a laundry where there are a lot of people. I can speak a few sentences now. I don't speak yet perfect, but I can already understand what is written. When people speak fast, I can't understand at the moment, but with a lot of patience and dedication and the help of my teachers, I will learn more English.

Sabina Arias



For me, the opportunity to live in this country filled me with many expectations, one of which was how I was going to communicate. I need a place to learn.

I think I found the best place to learn and the best people to teach me. The English Empowerment Center has been the best choice. With the help of Loren and the people who accompany us in each class, I have lost my fear of speaking, and I have started to comprehend what people say, for example, my children's teachers, people in my husband's work meetings, my neighbors, and my classmates.

Johana Arias

I started studying English last year. My teachers, Miss Maura and Miss Robin, have helped me a lot. Before, my husband used to make my appointments. Now I can make appointments for myself and for my children. This makes me feel very good. If my kids school calls, I can understand everything. I can go to meetings at the school and I understand the teachers. Before I never talked at the meetings. I'm still a little scared but not too much.

My boss only speaks English and now I think he understands me. I'm happy that I can do more things by myself.

Najia Aryoobi

English helps me to talk to people.

Shirin Asadollahi

I am a new immigrant. I started my new life with many hopes and dreams. Sometimes I feel lonely and I feel that by learning the English language I can find many friends not only here but also in the world. I have studied sociology and for this reason, I am very interested in discovering different cultures and nationalities in America. The English language gives me the opportunity to research, study and continue my education. If I can improve my language, I can find a better job. I will have more confidence to talk to people

and I won't be shy anymore. I will not depend on others to do administrative work, and of course, I have many unfinished tasks that I can do by learning the English language. Getting a driver's license is one of them.

Finally, I want to say, imagine that you can speak a language that one and a half billion people in the world can speak. How big the world is getting, isn't it?!

Viktoriiia Askrotkova

I have always dreamed of learning English. I dreamed of reading books in the original language. I started learning English in my country, Ukraine. I'm happy that I can continue my studies in the USA. I can understand people better now. I'm not afraid to speak! I can fill out registration forms for myself and my son. Communicating with people is very important to me and learning English gives me opportunities for the future.

Arlen Fransuad Aviles



When I arrived in this country, I only knew how to say hello and how are you. Since I started taking English classes at the English Empowerment Center I am understanding conversations in English more and more and that has helped me in my work and in everyday life. My goal is to learn English as much as I can in the English Empowerment Center.

Alba Ayala



I am very happy when I understand English. I really like it because I can communicate with my boss and co-workers.

Now I can have a better conversation with the doctor, in the hospital or in the clinic where I go. I am very happy about it.

Ana Ayala

English is a powerful tool in my life. Before learning English, I was very shy and I didn't dare talk. Since I started studying English, my communication has improved. In my work, I communicate better with my boss, clients and colleagues. At my children's school, I can communicate better with the teachers. In my community, I can talk better with my neighbors. Knowing English helps me make appointments, negotiate, solve problems, talk to doctors, and help my children with homework.

Learning English makes me feel independent and happy for being able to understand many things that I didn't know before.

Learning English is a goal in my life because I want to be bilingual, advance in the labor field and continue studying other things that I like. For me, English is the fundamental key to evolving in this generous country.

Muzhgan Ayar

Hello my name is Muzhgan Ayar. I am from Afghanistan. I am a student in the EEC.

When I came from Afghanistan, I could not speak English. It was very difficult for me.

Since I started learning English at EEC, my life has changed. I can read, write and speak well. I am very happy.

English language plays an important role in our lives because it makes communication possible between different people.

My goal for learning English is to be self-sufficient and never be a burden to the country and help my children in school.

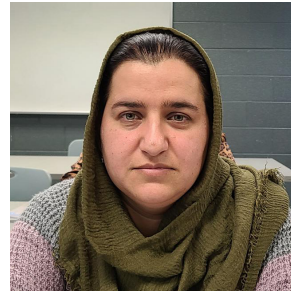
I am very happy to be with EEC. I am very happy because I am improving my pronunciation skills also.

I thank the teachers and workers of EEC. They are very good and excellent and especially thanks to teachers Cassie Kramer and Marie. They are very very special and excellent.

"By learning English, I now have a little confidence and the fear of English speaking is gone! I feel more comfortable and that it is fun to speak English. I can communicate with people in the neighborhood, my daughter's teacher, and new friends. The happiest thing for me is that I made friends who speak English!"

- Kaori, A., EEC Learner

Mina Ayobi



Before starting my English class, I couldn't comprehend a single word of English. When I first moved to Falls Church, I wanted to take an English class. The library provided me with information and steered me towards the proper route.

I enrolled in an English class and began learning the alphabet. Now that I am able to write a sentence and familiar with simple sentences, I can answer questions and converse with others.

Before I joined the English class, when health staff asked me about my birth date, I could not answer. Now I have learned my birthdate, how to make an appointment, shop, and rent a house. I have also learned which stores are cheaper or more expensive.

The school's teachers and administrators have been nice to me, and I really appreciate their honesty and hard work.

Kaori Azuma

Before I began learning English, I felt scared to speak English. I studied English for six years in Japan when I was a student. But the Japanese system for learning English is almost all writing, reading, and listening, not speaking. So I was scared to speak English. I couldn't see the eyes of an English speaker.

I want to change my opinion, so I am taking English classes.

By learning English, I now have a little confidence and the fear of English speaking is gone! I feel more comfortable and that it is fun to speak English. I can communicate with people in the neighborhood, my daughter's teacher, and new friends. The happiest thing for me is that I made friends who speak English!

My American life is changing for the better. Now I like English!

Mohammad Bagramwal



I want to become a doctor in the USA so I have to learn English. First, if I know English I will understand the teacher's lecture. Second, I will be able to read and study books. Third, I'd like to become a doctor, because all my family members are doctors. My father is a doctor. When I was a child, sometimes he took me to his clinic and hospital. When I started medical university, I started to work with him in his own clinic, hospital emergency department and surgery ward.

Norma Barahona

I came from El Salvador. I came to the US in October 2015. I work in a restaurant. I [am] really interested in English. I will help my kids.

Amina Barakzai

I want to go to the doctor. I want to get my driver's license. I want to go to work. I want to get my passport. I can go shopping. I can help my children with their homework. I can travel.

Khaleda Begum

Learning English brings happiness into my life. Now I can communicate with people and share my ideas and feelings, making new friends. Before learning English, I felt very sad and alone. Since taking English classes, I have learned new technologies, and helped my child learn from home. By learning English, now I can share my traditions, state my opinions, communicate with friends and neighbors, and prepare myself for the U.S. citizenship interview that helps me to reach my goals.

Erick Benitez

Since learning English, I feel so excited because when I go to the stores, I speak English very well. English has changed my life. I now have my electrician license and I can work for myself and communicate with my clients and that is what is important in my life.

Lily Benitez

Learning English Changed My Life

English is my second language. Before when people wanted to talk with me, I felt so scared that they wouldn't understand me. Now I say to myself, 'maybe they'll understand me, maybe not. But I'll try.'

It's easier to talk with my daughter's teachers and I can make my appointments.

Right now, I work for a cleaning company. Learning English generates more money because now I can help my boss more. My boss gave me the opportunity to have my own group, because I try to start a conversation with each client. I have my driver's license and I use a company car! I do much better. A few days ago, a client told me that my conversations were more fluid.

I want to make my own cleaning service company this year. I already have one house. English helps me talk to the customers and make a schedule.

Elizabeth Berryman



Learning English is helping me to talk more with other people who don't know English. It has helped me make lots of new friends, read books and have lots of fun. I love my teachers because they are fun to work with. Thank you to all my teachers because they do a great job with us.

Juan Bonilla

English helps me at work. English helps me at school. I am from the Dominican Republic. My son was born here in the United States in California. My girl came here in the United States at four years old and my wife was born here. She is from Chicago. I really want to learn English for my family.

Dinara Borodina

Learning English really changed me, my moral condition, and my life. Before learning English, I felt unconfident and stupid. I thought that people think “she is foolish, rude, and impolite”. But I felt helpless, like a child who couldn’t explain and understand even simple things.

Since taking English classes, I have felt more confident and free. English language allows me to communicate with different people at school, with teachers, with specialist doctors, with specialists at the bank and the DMV. I understand what is written in the rent contract and in insurance documents.

I’m not afraid (scared) so much, as before learning English. English boosted my confidence. Learning English opens up a whole new world, new literature, music, and movies. English opens up new opportunities. By learning English I can communicate with neighbors, with parents of classmates. I find new friends. With English, my life has become more interesting and colorful.

Soraya Cardenas

It helps us to work, travel, and communicate with people from other countries.

Eunice Carvajal



My name is Eunice. I’m from Colombia. I’m sixty-five years old. By learning English, I have more confidence in myself. I relate more easily with the people around me. I go to the supermarket and shopping. When I go to a medical appointment, the doctor understands me more. I need to study more because I’ve just started learning.

Rolando Andrade Castellan

I like English. It seems difficult but I know that with practice and dedication I can understand it and speak it very well. I have been in this country for two years and I saw that it is a fundamental element to interact with this language. I need to practice and master English much more to be able to help my son in whatever he requires from me. Being able to

understand helps me a lot both in my daily life and at work. At home I always try to be able to speak English. That’s where I feel more sure of myself and at the same time less nervous. But I always use my wife so that she can correct me in the sentences that I pronounce badly.

Juvelys Castillo

Communication with people in this society is very important to me, and immigrating has been difficult for me because my first language has always been Spanish at home. I considered it very valuable at the beginning of learning when we started school. The English language is one of the most important languages. It gives us the opportunity to get to know other cultures and see other people as part of a society that provides numerous structures to continue exploring knowledge and the ability to help at any time. It is very valuable because it helps me to express myself progressively and to be able to resolve certain situations that have to do with my daughter’s school, as well as medical issues. When this great country received me, I felt frustrated because I couldn’t understand or communicate. Throughout these years I have felt that I have been learning English and trying to look at language as a puzzle. I’m trying to solve it. I have made a very wise decision to attend this class. I feel very happy to be here. I have improved my pronunciation and the correct use of verbs. And although I still have a long way to go, I am not giving up. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this society. There are great teachers here.

Gloria Castro



Before, I didn’t come to school. I was afraid. Now I feel more confident because I know all the students and the teachers. I feel good because I’m learning a lot about English class now. I don’t feel afraid. My communication with my friends is good. So now I feel really good because I have good communication in my job with my boss and my co-workers.

Angela Castro



“Learning English Changed My Life”

My name is Angela Castro. I am from Colombia. In my country I did not have the opportunity to study English because I did not have the financial resources and it is expensive. When I arrived in the United States in October 2022, I did not understand the language, and I was very worried. Lately and as soon as I started learning the language, I feel better than when I arrived.

During this course I have learned more. I already understand words and I have improved my listening and speaking. If I continue studying I know that I can communicate better and get a better job to help my family.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to allow me to learn and I appreciate the patience and affection of Maura and Robin.

Bangjin Cha

While learning English, I also feel a sense of belonging that I am a member of this society. The opportunity to listen to English through the English Empowerment Center and to read, write and speak English gives me confidence. It's still not easy to meet and talk to a neighbor outside the fence of the house. However, the psychological anxiety and pressure that I feel is gradually disappearing. When I think of English, my mouth automatically closes but now English comes out little by little. I want to spend more time and effort learning English. I need to just hang in there and my quality of life will improve.

Jung Ja Cho



I couldn't do anything before learning English. I'm learning English so I can read signs in English. I'm learning English so I can talk in the neighborhood. I'm learning English so I can write a book.

Eun Joo Cho

Before learning English, I felt the need of English study in the USA.

Since taking English class, I have found a better job. I worked as a waitress in some Korean restaurants before. But now I work at a Korean American restaurant. So, I can spare more time to speak English with co-workers and customers.

I feel I can not speak English well. I will try to study English harder and practice more to get the English conversation easily.

Ellen Chun



Before learning English in this class, I was not good at sentences, conversation, and grammar. After learning English at school, I know English sentences, conversation, and grammar. My words improved. I'll continue to learn.

Steve Chun



Now I can speak English by myself, by practicing at home. Before it was hard to practice on my own. Please continue to teach me a lot more. Thank you for speaking English and teaching me.

Baudilia Cos

To help my son. Talk to the doctor. For my job. Its important. Go shopping.



EEC instructor passing out materials at our Destination Workforce ® class with Marymount University.

Veronica Cruz

Learning English is to be able to communicate well with our children and express myself with them and with the neighbors and to have more job opportunities. It also helped me become a citizen of this country.

Katy Cruz

My name is Katy Cruz. I'm from Honduras. I have a daughter. Her name is Emilia. I only speak Spanish. I work in remodeling. I want to learn English because I want to help my daughter [with] her homework. I want to have more opportunities to work.

Eddy Cuellar



Nowadays, I realize the importance and necessity of English. If I had realized before how important it is to learn English, I would have done it before. Today, I love English, learning new words and listening to the pronunciation. Today, I understand and it helps me to have new relationships. I read articles and the news, follow programs on YouTube, and watch series on Netflix in English. Actually, I feel calmer knowing that I can understand when going to the supermarket or a restaurant and being able to place an order. But I still feel nervous when speaking. Today I can say that the biggest challenge I have in my life is to master English, knowing that it can open doors for me in my field of work.

Daniela Delgadillo



Before learning English, I couldn't have job opportunities, I was always at home afraid. Now that I am learning, I can teach my little son to read short words in English. Now that I am learning English, I can feel more confident to participate in small conversations with my children.

Jaime Deras

Speaking English has changed my life. First, I can talk with my children's teacher and practice with my boys. I went to conferences and there were a lot of parents. I am a father to Chris, 11 years old. I asked, How is he in school? How is his behavior? The teacher told me he likes to read and play, and he pays attention to everything. I felt happy because my kid is intelligent, and he doesn't fight with anyone. Second, I am talking well to my boss. Third, for more opportunities. Fourth, to help my children with their homework. In conclusion, learning English is important.

Meron Desta

Learning English is a little bit difficult for adults who learn as a second language. As we all know, if you learn a language at an early age, it is easy to understand and speak well, but for adults it needs more effort and takes more time.

When I came to my life in the U.S., I couldn't even understand the pronunciation that the speaker said. So I started to listen to the news and radio as much as I could. Now I have improved my English language, but for the best result I came to the English classes here at the English Empowerment Center.

I hope this will help me to easily help my kids and when I take them to the hospital and so on.

Joaquin Diaz

English changed my life at work. English changed my life when it came to eating at a restaurant. English changed my life in knowing how to communicate with people. English changed my life in knowing how to say my phone number.

Thi Thenh Thuy Dinh

I am living in a prosperous urban country. I want to learn English so that I can go to places in America by myself and communicate what I need to do confidently.

Desiree Djayard

English has changed my life because it allows me to express myself, communicate with other people, friends, and acquaintances. But I still want to learn more so that I can do the job I'm passionate about - teaching.

In my country I taught French in colleges and this job fascinates me. So I would like to learn English so that I can continue in the teaching field here.

When I would take my son to the doctor before they would give me the translator in French but now it is easy for me to speak to the doctor in English. If I speak more English, I will help my son learn to speak more and help him when he goes to school.

Wilerkis A. Duran Pina

English changed my life when it came to eating in a restaurant. English changed my life in knowing how to communicate with people. English changed my life knowing how to say my phone number. English changed my life knowing how to spell my name.

Parwaneh Ehrari



I like to learn English. First, I want to talk to people and go shopping. Second, I want to talk to the doctor. English is very important. Third, I listen to English. It's good to talk with people and I like to help my children. Finally, learning English is very hard.

Mohammed Omer Ali Elhussein



I felt sad before learning the English language, because I can not communicate with my friends, at my home, [with] my neighbors, at work, or in my community.

Since taking English class, I have found a better job, learned new technologies, and my life is starting to change.

Now I can pay my own bills. I share my traditions, and communicate at work. I applied for a new job. I did my citizenship interview. I became a U.S. Citizen. Now I can vote.

By learning English, I can be involved in more conversations with my manager, employees, my children's school, and with my community.

Helen F. Equbeeazy

Knowing English has helped me a lot with my job. By knowing more I'm able to help customers much better. I also understand more of what they are talking about.

Elda Escobar

I need more English.

Zoila Escobar

Taking English classes has been very important to me, especially in my job. Before, I felt sad because people talked to me and I couldn't understand what they were talking about.

Since taking English classes, now I can communicate more with my customers and I give them better service. Also, now I help my partner to take their orders, and take orders by phone. Before, I got nervous to answer a call and didn't understand the callers.

Now, I speak English a little more. I feel confident to go shopping, to go to the doctor, and pay my bills myself. Although, it is necessary to continue improving because I live in the U.S.A..

Malika Faizi

Hello, my name is Malika, and I have studied English since June 2022. When I came to America I did not know English and I was shy. Now I am much better. I am going to the market and can buy groceries. I still don't know many words. I try hard to learn and speak English. I am speaking with my kids and try to learn English. My little English has helped me a lot. I solve my problems by going to school after children. I want to study English to go to college and I want to help others. I am very thankful to my teachers who have helped me. Thank you.

Jose H. Alvarez Fores

For my work. For my conversation. For my communication. For going to the restaurant. For going to the doctor. For going to the supermarket. For going shopping.

Zarifa Frozanfar

I want to learn English. I want to go to work. I want to get my driver's license. I can go to the hospital. I can go shopping. I can help my children with their homework. I can travel.

Yamil Fuentes

My name is Yamil Fuentes. I came from Honduras. I have a daughter born here. She is six years old. I need to learn English to be able to communicate at work and at school with my daughter's teacher. Also, sometimes when I get sick and I need to be able to communicate with the nurse and the doctor in the hospital.

I need to speak English to overcome and get ahead in this country. Also, to be able to help my daughter with her homework. I need to speak English to meet new people and also get a better position in my job.

Oswaldo Reyna Galicia

I think that studying and learning English has helped me to get better jobs, new friends, to carry out different procedures that seemed impossible before. It has been a good experience and I want to continue on this path and learn as much as I can. Before learning English, I felt bad not being able to understand other people. I still have a lot to learn but now I feel more secure. Since taking English class I have a new job, new friends, and the adaptation is better and more fast. By learning English now I can carry out procedures easily. By learning English I can be involved in more conversations. I feel more confident when entering a bank to carry out a transaction. I still have a lot to learn and the highlight of this year is learning English.



The English Empowerment Center's first Career & Opportunities Fair, April 2023

Elaine Gao

I am Elaine Gao and I have been in the United States for one year and ten months. I like living the sweet life here. I have learned a lot about learning English for two months. I have learned a lot about [using] maps and common DMV sentences. It is very practical. I am going to the mall and communicating with people. Now I can say some short sentences. The twice weekly class is very helpful and the teacher is very patient. Thank you! Looking forward to the next English level.

Tania Garcia

For being able to speak. Have a job. Have friends. For going to a restaurant. For understanding. For going to an appointment with the doctor. For going to the store. For going to the supermarket.

Esther García Nuñez

Hello. My name is Esther. I'm from Honduras. I have two daughters for which I fight everyday. My eldest daughter is 9 years old. The youngest is 15 months old. I want to learn English.

Gunay Gasimova

I am Gunay Gasimova. I am 39 years old. I have two children. I am a primary school teacher. I love my profession. I have 12 years of experience. I came to the USA 8 months ago. I cannot speak in English. I was very worried. In my country, I tried to learn English several times but I failed. I thought I can never study English. Learning English [had] become a nightmare for me. Sometimes, I wake up speaking very good English in my sleep. I always wondered if this would ever be possible.

That was my opinion until I took a course at the English Empowerment Center. I am grateful to my teachers Marcia Dursi and Fred Hufford. Marcia has boosted my self confidence. She has made me believe that I can learn English. Now, I am halfway to learning English perfectly. I feel that my understanding is better and I am ready to talk in basic form anywhere. I need to continuously learn so I can work again in my profession.

"I want to learn English to help my son with his homework. I want to apply for citizenship and have more fluid communication with people who speak English."

-Rosibel G.M., EEC Learner

Natsinet Gebremedhin



Before I came to the English Empowerment Center, I had a lot of problems. For example, I would speak broken English. I was afraid to speak because I didn't know many words. I did not have any interaction with other people around me.

However, now, when I come to the English Empowerment Center, I have improved my English. Yet, I was nervous at first and I was not brave enough to speak with my classmates. Now, I'm okay with communicating in English with anyone. Also, I improved my score in under[standing] English, as well as when my teacher explains the lesson.

As a result, by taking the English course, because of the change that it made in my daily life, there are no words to explain my happiness.

Daniel Gebreyohannes

Learning English changed my life because before school, I'm not good right now. I'm good to my job. Everything is easy to my life.

Aklat Getaneh



Before learning English, I can not read, write, or talk. Since taking English class, I have new friends at my work place. By learning English, now I pay my credit card, communicate at work, and applied for a new job. By learning English, I have more conversations with people at work. Now that I speak English, I feel good.

Rosibel Gomez Martinez

My name is Rosibel Gomez Martinez. I came to the United States in the year 2015. I'm from Honduras in Central America. I have two children named Giezy and Nohomy. My son is in kindergarten. My daughter is two years old. I want to learn English to help my son with his homework. I want to apply for citizenship and have more fluid communication with people who speak English. I only speak Spanish and I want to expand my language.

Jennifer Guerrero

Before learning English, it was difficult to live here. Since taking English classes, I like living here. Now I can communicate with more people when I go to different places. For example, shopping is more fun. Also I can understand my supervisor. I would like to get a better job and speaking English will help me. Furthermore, I enjoy watching the movies in English. In conclusion, learning English makes living in the USA better for me!

Bayron Gutierrez

My name is Bayron Gutierrez. I'm from Honduras. My desire to learn English is to be able to have a better relationship with the people of this American country.

I want to have good communication in my work and especially with my beautiful daughter so that we can share beautiful conversations with me and her. I would like to help my daughter with her homework and also read stories with her.

Jerson Gutierrez

My name is Jerson. I am from the beautiful country of Honduras. I have been in the United States for three years. My decision to study English is because of my job. I work in electricity. I have a family -- my wife and two daughters.

I am very interested in learning. I have been told many times, "This is America, you don't speak Spanish."

Zenith Maria Gutierrez Fontalvo

I always wanted to learn English to be able to sing songs in English. Today my dream goes further. I want to learn to get to know new cultures, customs, and new people. I want to learn to boost my work dreams. I love everything about art: music, dancing, and painting.

I want to show myself that I am capable of doing anything I propose.

Tharia Hamed

Learning English changed my life. I can talk to my coworkers about the work. It helps me to study for my citizenship exam because it's easier to understand. When I go shopping, if I need help now I know how to ask for it.

Sona Hashimi



First, I need to learn more English. Second, I like to go to college. Third, English helps get a good job in the future. It helps my children in school. English is very important for communication for business. In summary, English is very important for me.

Lucy Herrera



By learning English, I can communicate better. It's very important for my family and me. I can spell better. I am a good reader now, and I am doing better at my work.

Juan Hiciano

Before starting to study at the Empowerment Center, I was very afraid to go out to places, because I did not know how to speak the language. But now I have more confidence in myself when I listen or try to speak English.

Noemi Cruz Jaldin

I want to learn to speak English because I need new opportunities for my life as an immigrant. It is difficult if you cannot communicate. It is difficult to learn, but not impossible. I want to learn more to help people who cannot read and write in my work. I met many people who are disadvantaged. Even though technology exists, they cannot use it if they don't know how to read and write. In the future I would like to open a nursery for low-income children in my country, Bolivia, and be able to teach them. Although English courses are very expensive in my country, it's opening more doors for the future because English is a universal language.

Mary Jara

I moved to the United States of America. I never imagined learning a second language at my age. At first it was difficult for me to communicate with Americans. I only knew how to say hello. I think English is a very difficult language. I have an excellent English teacher. I can communicate with people from other cultures. I feel like a kid again. Now I can read things in English that I never imagined. I am learning how to write in English. I practice English with my son. I decided to speak more English at home. Learning English allows me to understand people a little more. I think that English has changed my life in many ways. I hope that English will continue to change my life for the better and I will keep learning more and more about English every day.

Miseon Jeong



I can only say hello now. But after taking this class. My goal is to communicate freely with neighbors. And one more thing, I want to teach children origami.

Nadia Jeridi

Learning English has changed my life. Before learning English, I felt worried about my future in the USA. After taking courses at the English Empowerment Center, I feel more confident and I see a better future. Now I can apply for jobs and handle the interview all by myself. By learning English, I can successfully answer a waiter and talk with the doctor and my daughter's teacher without the help of my husband.

I'll continue the next levels at the English Empowerment Center until I master the English language.

Eyoung Jung

Before learning English, I felt scared because I can't speak English. So, I have to learn English. I have studied [with the English Empowerment Center] for eight months. Now that I can speak a little bit, I can go alone to CVS, the grocery store, bank, car wash, and cleaners. I'm less afraid now. I don't feel so helpless any more. Thank you for my teacher Valerie and the great tutors. If I can speak very well, I want to get a job.

Aziza Khan

Before learning English, I felt like English was very hard. Since taking English classes, I have learned new technologies. By learning English now, I can participate in programs that help me. By learning English, I can be involved with my neighbors. Now that I can speak English, I feel a lot better. I did not go to school in Afghanistan. It is difficult for me to read and write.

Young I Kim

I wanted to see the beautiful color in the spring flowers before the hot summer came, so I went to the Shenandoah Mountains for a picnic. I was so excited and looked forward to seeing the beautiful spring scenery while driving.

When I found out about the English Empowerment Center via the Korean Community Service Center, it was wonderful information. The English teacher, which was known as Ms. Marcia Dursi, is a great member of the teaching staff of the English Empowerment Center. She teaches proper pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and even American history! Ms. Dursi's great effort made my life easily engage American life well. Thank you, Ms. Dursi, have a great life!

Dinh Le

Before learning English, it felt very difficult. I like learning English but when I heard someone speak English, I did not understand.

Since taking English, I made new friends, and found a new job, I can help my child from home.

By learning English, now I can apply for a new job, pay my own bills, talk about the needs of my family and community, state my opinions, community at work. I can be involved in more conversations. I can be involved with people at work, my neighbors, and my community. Now I speak English, I feel very happy.

Theara Leang



Hi. My name is Theara Leang. I come from Cambodia. I am Cambodian. I arrived here in December, 2021. My English was not good so I have to come to study here. I want to learn more English. Here, English is very important in communication and now I can speak English a little with other people. So I tried to learn more English to improve my English and find a new job too. Thank you!

Suk Lee



Since I started English classes, I have been learning many words. That is helping [my] reading and writing [in] English. Before when I met foreign people, I couldn't communicate well. But now, I can communicate with my neighbors, too. Thank you, English classes.

Soojin Lee

While I was resting from a sore right shoulder, I started studying English at the English Empowerment Center at the recommendation of a friend. I came to the United States in 2004, but the more I lived, the more I needed to learn English. I had to earn money to live with my children. I couldn't learn English because I thought it was too late to study and I was too old. However, as I studied English, I thought "Yes, I can learn English, I can speak English well." I gained confidence that I could study at NOVA. If I can communicate well in English, my daughters will be proud of me. Because of my poor English, my daughters translated for me. And I will get a job with benefits. If I speak English well, my quality of life will be better and my life will be changed. So, I will study English hard! Yes, I can do it!!!

Zinet Ousman Legesse

Learning English is very important. I benefit things from learning English. For example, I can shop by myself, I can communicate with my doctor, etc.

The most important part of learning English is the opportunity of learning other subjects. By learning English, I will be able to learn topics such as Science, Information Technology, Mathematics and more.

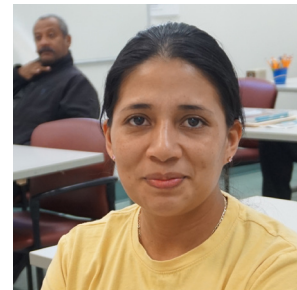
Furthermore, learning English gives me the tools to teach others what I have learned. The most beloved want is to teach my children. This way they can build even further on what I will teach them.

Learning English is definitely important and I'm excited to learn more.

Niyireth Lesmes

Before speaking English I was frustrated about not being able to communicate with people. Since I started taking English classes, I have made new friends. Learning English, I can give my opinions and share my Columbian traditions with people. By learning English I can make decisions and share my ideas regarding the work environment and friends.

Karla Contreas Lopez

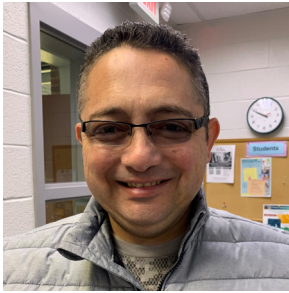


In my life it has helped a lot because I can have good communication with my [boss] and my friend. I feel better with myself in my community. Learning English has given me a lot of opportunities to become a better person. Since taking English classes I have learned to communicate with those around me.

"Since taking English, I made new friends, and found a new job, I can help my child from home."

-Dinh Le, EEC Learner

John Lopez



One of the biggest fears when I received the news that I was going to the United States on commission was having to communicate in English. Now, thanks to the trust given by the English Empowerment Center through my teachers since the beginning of the classes, in this short time I have been able to find the easiest way to speak in the universal language!! I hope to continue learning day by day, achieving greater mastery by improving communication at work and in my social circle. Thanks you so much EEC, Laurie, Loren and our entire team of volunteer teachers and of course my classmates who do their best so that we learn everyday!!!

Julissa Magalí Morales

My name is Julissa Magalí Morales. I'm from El Salvador. I came to the United States in 2014. I need to learn English so I can have more opportunities and to help my son with his homework.

Sayed Mahboob

Learning English helped me to talk with people and helped me to understand my school lessons. I am able to ask questions and understand the teacher's lessons.

English is an international language and everything computers, phones, etc. are first in English. Everyone should learn English.

This is how English changed my life.

Tamana Mahboob

English is important in my life because I need to help my family. I want my children to have a higher education. In this matter, I have to know English. I want to gain my citizenship. Finally, I need to improve my English, and that is all.

Sabrullah Mahbubi

Before learning English, I was not able to understand the text for signs to read and know for normal life like where the stores and shops that I needed. Since taking English class I am able to talk with someone, read the texts, and write something.

By learning English, now I can go somewhere by myself without a helping translator and can get a job and work.

Yalda Mahmoodi



Learning English Changed My Life

English is so important because it's an international language. Now that I'm living in the US, I need to improve my English. English is important for routine life. If I can't understand, I can't do anything. I can make relationships with neighbors and friends. I can make appointments for myself and I don't need anyone to help me every time. When I can speak well, I don't need to have someone helping me to do anything. I can go to doctor alone. I can have good relationships with neighbors and my friends.

My neighbor understands but I have to repeat. I hope one day I can speak English really well.

Right now, I work as a dental assistant. I want to be a dental hygienist. I want to speak well because then I can speak with everyone. When I speak English well, I can reach my goals.

Scarleth Maldonado

English changed my life because [I met] my goals: I can talk to my son and daughter, I can talk to people everywhere in English and at the store. I'm happy when I study English. I can speak to a doctor. Get a better job. Communicate with my friends. A better way to write, to speak, to learn English. Live better. Make more money. I can study in a university. I can help my kids with their homework. I can talk to my kids' teacher. Learn more, faster, when I take more days of classes. I understand my teachers: John, Larry, and Chris.

I like to [speak] English: more chances, knowing how to drive, knowing how to get my driver's license. Better driving skills.

I feel safe when I understand English. Also, when my kids speak and I understand.

Ashiqullah Malyar

Learning English has had a significant impact on my life. It has opened up opportunities for communication, career advancement, education, and personal growth. Through my English language studies, I have been able to connect with people from all over the world, pursue new career opportunities, access some of the best educational resources in the world, and gain a sense of confidence and empowerment. Overall, learning English has been a transformative experience that has enriched my life in countless ways.

Marta Martinez

Hello, my name is Marta. I'm from El Salvador. I came to the USA 26 years ago. I understand some words in English, but feel difficult to speak. The persons say to me that I speak fine, but when I go to the doctor, or meetings in the school of my son, I always need someone to translate for me.

In previous years, I went to English classes, but never completed it. I hope to continue now, because my principal goal is learning very well, with no need of a translator. Speaking, reading, and writing will be the goal. Speaking English changed my life, and when I learn [well], it will open the doors for the best job. Thanks teachers.

Dirma Matus

I like to study English to practice in my daily life. For example, I can talk with my doctor, go shopping and talk with friends. I speak English at my work with my companions. In my house, I like to speak with my daughter and my son. It is small practice but I like it. In my house I would like to have a dog as a pet. I really like the way the teacher teaches English. She is very dynamic and explains very well. I do not fall asleep in her classes. I am interested in learning more and more.

Juan Carlos Medina

Learning English is a language that is very interesting for being necessary in daily life. I would like to speak perfectly for communication with my housemates. I want to find opportunities for work or business, and meet and talk perfectly with a lot of people. English helps me to study new academic programs, read and understand the news in the world. Learning English is my new goal in life. English is the language of the United States and I have to learn it out of respect for their traditions.

Ana Evelyn Medina



Before learning English, I was feeling scared because I don't have an idea how to express myself to other people.

Since taking English class, I feel confident in myself, when I go to the store, or at work.

Now I can have a small conversation. But I feel shy when the people do not understand what I asked or said. I felt like my brain was blocked with a simple question. I'm still working on controlling my emotions.

I am not going to give up on taking English classes. I want to feel proud and also my son feels the same towards me. My son will be proud of his mother.

Thanks to the teachers for being very patient with us.

Lilian Mejia



Before learning English, I felt bad because I could not express myself with outsiders. I decided to take English classes which helped me make new friends, have more contact with people, and apply for a new job. English is very important in this new life that I am living in the United States.

Gloria Mendez

Thank you for the opportunity you give us to learn the English language and for our teacher, Bill, for his patience and motivation to continue learning. The English language is important and he is helping me communicate with my daughter's teachers, go to a pharmacy and explain what I need and to be able to greet people and establish a little communication. To continue learning is my goal.

Ingrid Mendez

This is my history. My name is Ingrid. I'm 40 years old. I married in 2007 and I have three kids now. I came to the USA in 2005. My family is from Guatemala City. I will need to study English because I need to speak English with the teacher, in the store, and with other people. In this moment, I'm happy with my family because in the summer we will go to the beach.

Mabel Mendoza

Before learning English, I felt when people talked to me in English that I didn't understand. Since taking English classes, I have found a new job and can talk with managers, co-workers and my friends. By learning English, I can communicate with people, read directions, read my prescriptions for my pills, pay bills and make appointments. English gives me better opportunities in my life.

Arely Miranda

Learning English facilitates my work. It motivates me to learn more. I communicate with others.

Nabeela Mohammed

Learning English changed my life. I began talking more confidently than before and I helped my kids a lot in their school. I feel happier after learning English because I have become more involved and independent.

Hesam Moniri

Learning English is very rewarding. From helping you to see the world and to making new opportunities in your career, learning English can really open new doors for you.

I want to learn English at first so it will be better living in the USA. Before learning English I cannot do my daily tasks alone. I need help from my family to see the doctor, go to the shops, go to government departments, etc...

But now I can do these things alone. Now I can speak English a little and I want to increase my communication skills to find a better job and make a better life for my family in the USA.

Berna Montanez

My problem is speaking and above all my attitude. I couldn't have a lively conversation with people because I didn't feel sure of myself. But now that I'm studying English, my life changed completely. I feel happy because I can talk more. I have better pronunciation now and I am learning more about cultures around me. I feel like it's my new challenge.

Sadrac Morales

I am a person capable of doing different jobs, but if I don't know how to speak English, I can't offer my services. Since I started with English classes, I can do my job better, I can communicate with people, I can go to the store and ask for items I need without being afraid.



EEC class aide helps students in a beginning-level English class.

Vilma Morales

Learning English changed my life, because I always wanted to get a different job, where I can speak in English. In the job I have, I am talking to people who speak only Spanish.

By learning English, I can apply for a new job. I would like to work at the airport, because I used to work for an airline in El Salvador. Since taking English classes, I go with my mother to appointments and I can understand what the doctor is saying.

Nagiba

When I came to America life was very hard for me because I couldn't speak English. I didn't understand English and I couldn't help my child. But now I can do all things.

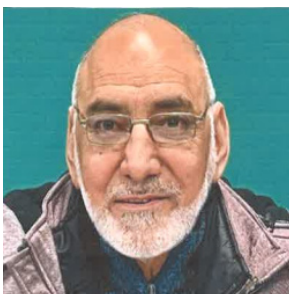
Mary Najarro

Before learning English I feel very sure I can use the computer in my job. I can do my job with more security. And, I understand [in] meetings and I can say something that I need. I think it's very important, because it eases the communication. Only I need more practice so I can be learning better. I feel happy.

Elsa Naula

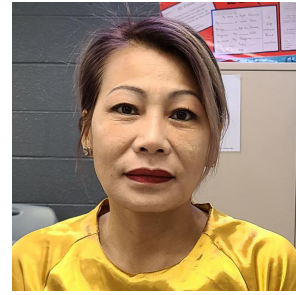
I like to learn English because that way I can help my son with his homework. I can also buy and ask questions in English, although I feel nervous when I am going to pronounce it. But I know that learning English here is very important because I can have more opportunities for a better job.

Miagul Nawid



English is very important for everybody. First, I want to learn the English language. Second, I will try to speak more English, and I hope to speak fluently and clearly. Third, I study a lot of English books. In conclusion, English language is international language, and English is my favorite language.

Thuy Nguyen



Before learning English, I felt frustrated and limited in my ability to communicate with others. It was difficult to express myself and understand others, and I often felt isolated. However, since taking English classes, now I can communicate more effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and I feel more confident in my ability to participate in conversations. Learning English has also helped me at home, as I am now able to attend school meetings and communicate effectively with my child's teachers. In my community, I can interact with my neighbors and form friendships with individuals who may have been previously out of reach due to language barriers. Additionally, my proficiency in English has opened up many job opportunities, which has helped me reach goals of financial stability and a sense of security. Overall, English has had a profound impact on my life, allowing me to break down barriers and form meaningful connections with others.

Hai Nguyen

Before learning English I felt a little nervous when interacting with native [English speakers]. Since taking English class, I found a new job and I made new friends. By learning English, now I can apply for a new job and become a US citizen and vote. By learning English I can be involved in making conversations with people at work and with my neighbors. Now that I speak English, I can sing my favorite songs. I can speak English with my neighbors and community. Now that I speak English I feel confident and I'm happy to understand English.

Rukhsar Niaz

I am learning English now. I can read, write, talk, and help my child with his homework. I can make a doctor's appointment and I can also do a job search. I studied the driving manual and got my driver's license. I can go shopping alone and solve problems by myself. I am happy with my progress and my goal is to be a teacher in the future.

Shegofa Noor

English changed my life in many ways. Now I am a student. It helps me to communicate with other students and also with teachers. When I speak English I will communicate with other people better. When I speak English I will be able to get a good job. We can become better educated. When we speak English, we can easily travel anywhere in the world, and also we will learn about other cultures. The best way to improve my English is by speaking it everyday. When we speak English, we will learn many new words. I will learn from books, and watching movie dramas and cartoons also helps us.

I want to improve my writing skills by learning how to write English, punctuation, and spelling rules. I improve my reading skills by reading books in English every day. I improve my speaking skills by talking with people. English is also the language of technology, science, politics, and finance. In conclusion, I think English has changed my life in many ways. I hope that it will continue to change my life for the better and will keep learning more and more about English every day.

Abdullah Noori

I had a good English teacher who helped me to improve my English and I feel more confident in this language. She is very patient with me and she will always give me positive feedback when I do not understand something. It also gave me confidence that even if I cannot speak perfect English, I can always write [in] English.

She also made me more creative in writing and I feel happy when I write things with English. At first, it was hard for me to write something because of my poor vocabulary, but now I know how to use the words that she taught me so well. When I write something, I always think that it is very good and better than others. I can read a lot of books in English and the words in them are clear to me. There are also many movies that have been produced by people who speak English well so I can understand what they say. I feel happy and confident that I can understand the things that they say.

I have a feeling that when I do not learn English well, there will be many things in my life that cannot be done by me and it will also affect other people's lives. So I have decided to learn English well so that my life will be good and people around me will also be happy because of me.

English has changed me to be a world citizen. Being a world citizen has a lot of meaning, but for me, being a world citizen means that I'm aware of and understand the wider world. This is related to the way I learned English. Apart from studying English in the classroom, I enriched my English through reading articles and news on the internet and watching a lot of videos and movies on the internet.

Hamida Noori

English changed my life because there are many people I talk to who speak English and I want to talk to them. When I go somewhere like the doctor or when someone asks me something, I will know. English is really important to learn. A lot of people speak English.

Roya Noori



Learning English is very important for communication. English is the language of instruction in many universities and schools around the world. English language helps to get a good job in the future. This job will get money. I want to start college at NOVA and be a dental assistant.

Enjila Noorzai

My name is Enjila Noorzai and I'm from Afghanistan. I arrived in the USA in September 2021. When I came here I knew English a little bit. I did not have the confidence to be able to speak properly. I recognized that learning a different language opens a big world of opportunity to everyone. For me, also learning the language opened up all the opportunities. Now I have gained confidence and feel empowered and encouraged to go everywhere as I want. I have a lot of activities such as shopping at stores and going to the pharmacy. I enjoy visiting some places like parks, beaches, going to restaurants and parties. And I can connect in good communication with people, neighbors, and colleagues who are from different nationalities. Now I also feel able to listen and watch radio and TV and video. With my improved English skills, now I can read the big books and news. I appreciate the English Empowerment Center, which provided me with the opportunity to learn English so that I could improve my language skills. And I would like to thank all the dear and excellent teachers who helped me along the way of learning English. I appreciate their patience and dedication, which I will never, never forget.

Rahma Nour

My self study of the English language is very important because when I am coming to the USA, everything is dependent on the English language. I must learn the English language to understand my kids' teachers, doctors, and work. Everyone who lives in the USA communicates to me in English.

Esraa Opied

English helps me a lot for communication at work, with my co-workers and my boss. At my children's school, it helps me communicate with the teachers and parents. Also, when I go to buy something important at the pharmacy, it helps.

Ana Orellana

Learning English has changed my life because I can understand what other people say to me in English and I can express myself. Not much, because I am just learning. This is my second English class. I started taking classes in September. But I feel different because I can understand many things that I didn't understand before.

Ruby Ortega

I am learning English to reach a better job. I am learning English to get a better job. I am learning English to reach my goals. I am learning English to talk with my neighbors. I am learning English to help my daughters. I am learning English to make more money. I am learning English to talk with my co-workers. I am learning English to make new friends. I am learning English to participate in new study programs. I am learning English to help others. I am learning English to pay my bills. I am learning English to travel. I am learning English to learn another language.

Karla Ortiz

Now I can speak with my neighbor, have a conversation with the teacher at school. In my work I can understand my boss. Now I can order food in a restaurant. I can help my son with his homework.

Rosibel Ortiz

I changed my life by learning more words in English. I can practice my English with my children.

Vafa Orujova

When I came to the USA, I couldn't speak English and I couldn't understand what the people were saying. It was very sad. My daughter and I were so worried. We felt so bad here! Life seemed to have stopped. We didn't know what to do. I didn't know how we could go to the store or restaurants, or some kinds of departments. Everything seemed to us very strange. I always asked my husband for help, and he worked and often he couldn't help me because he was very busy. It was a very difficult time of our life. But now everything has changed in my life. I go to the store, restaurants and any department by myself. I solve my problems more easily. Without English, we are zero in the USA. My daughter and I should learn more English and continue to develop! English will open all doors to our goals!

Yulia Osiichuk



English is the most popular language in the world. Many people know it. I have always envied people who speak English. After all, it was easy for them to find a good job, communicating with foreigners, traveling. I didn't have the opportunity to learn English.

Now I am in the USA. It's hard to live here without knowing English. I don't feel comfortable. When I started taking conversational English courses I felt better.

Now I can speak a little English, I stopped being shy, I began to understand shop assistants, teachers, and doctors. I hope that soon I will speak better and will be able to find a good job. I am very happy that I am studying at English Empowerment Center.

"But now everything has changed in my life. I go to the store, restaurants and any department by myself. I solve my problems more easily."

-Vafa O., EEC Student

Hadeel Osman



First, thanks for giving me this opportunity to talk about how learning English has changed my life. Before learning English, things were difficult for me (speaking with my child, at work, friends, neighbors, and community). For example, when I went shopping, how to speak to with the cashier, and naming a lot of the items.

Since taking English class I have felt that with minimal change, it has helped. The first thing, self confidence. How to talk with classmates, teachers, get new information, make new friends, new technology, help my child learn from school.

By learning English, I can make important decisions, pay my own bills, talk about the needs of my family and community, work, how to meet my child's teacher, talk about same topic (habits, share my traditions, special food), apply for new job, find information on a website.

By learning English, I can be involved with my neighbors, people at work, community, make conversation with some people. Now that I speak English, I feel better than before. I will continue to be a proficient speaker and reach my goals.

Ebtesam Osman

Learning English changed my life in practical ways and makes me confident of myself in speaking. Now I can talk and deal with my neighbors easily. Also, with my teacher, I learned to talk to everyone without an interpreter. I hope to study a master's degree in Law. I plan to continue to try to reach my goal. Also, when I speak well, I can help people who cannot communicate in English and translate for them. Studying the language is of importance for everyone in order to be able to keep your life running easily.

Zenaida Bastidas de Pacheco

Coming to the United States at my age and studying a new language has been a beautiful experience. Thanks to the excellent leadership and unconditional support of the organization "English Empowerment Center", this has allowed me to grow as a person and professionally being able to understand and speak English, and at the same time have multiple contacts with young people from different cultures.

Since I am studying and learning the language and working as a volunteer in the organization's office, I feel good about myself, grateful to my teachers for helping me to improve my English skills. This has allowed me to function more confidently and improve my communication with people. I am aware that although I still have a lot to learn, I am giving my best and one day it will be much better.

My future plans are to use all possible resources to improve my knowledge of the English language, achieve American citizenship, and study the possibility of working in the United States.

Sarito Pakharin

Learning English changed my life. Before I didn't know how to write English. Now I am learning writing more than before. Now I can apply for jobs online myself. I can speak anywhere to anyone.

Now my neighbors understand me. My friends also understand. After taking English class, I can speak very well and I can explain my problems. Now my neighbors like to talk often. We go out when both of us are off, going on evening walks, shopping, and dancing. We also go to a restaurant to eat together on the weekend. English learning made my life very happy. My teacher helps me a lot, coming to this point. Thank you so much teacher [and the] English Empowerment Center for this opportunity to receive learning.

Yolanda Paredes

Before learning English, it was difficult to communicate. I didn't know how to ask which bus to take to go to work, or where the pharmacy is located. Since I am learning English, I feel more secure and I can talk with friends about how beautiful this country is, about the opportunities it offers us about its culture, its economy, respect for the law, freedom of expression, etc.. By learning English, I can now pay my bills. I can communicate with people at work, neighbors and the community, I can also get a better paid job. The English language changes people, because it helps to meet life goals. Now that I can speak English, I sincerely thank the English Empowerment Center and especially my teacher, Loren Zander. Thanks so much for teaching us the English language with such passion.

Sun Park

I hopefully won't be afraid to talk to anyone, and I really want to fluently speak English and write it. In fact, I have been in the USA since 1979, but unfortunately I don't speak English very well. So far I worked a lot in forty years. My life was extremely busy and hard. My jobs were housewife, two children's mom, six businesses' owner with my husband, and all the businesses' paperwork. Now I have only one business. I don't go to work every day. I go to work once or twice a week because I want to enjoy my life. I have one son and one daughter. They are married several years ago. I have almost four grandchildren. That means my last grandson is going to come someday next month in April. However, these days, I can enjoy my hobbies: hiking, golf, reading books and travelling. Of course I love to volunteer too when someone needs help. Anyhow, I never have had to be absent from church (Sunday mass) and I often attend weekday mass too. I usually get to feel God blessed me. That's how I survived until now. Finally I have time to study English and I can do fun things. That's why I am especially happy and satisfied with my life in these days.

Donahil Paz



Hello! My name is Donahil Paz. I am a student at the English Empowerment Center. I like my class. For me, it's difficult when to use "Do" or when to use "to be" but now I understand more. Thank you teacher Loren!!!

Karina Perez

Because it is very important for me to get a new job, English is an opportunity to improve my life. I will work in any field to be able to work near my home. It is very difficult for me now. I work everyday and I'm tired. My pay is at \$14 an hour. I need to pay my apartment \$1,700. My life for now is not easy. My daughter studies every day and goes to bed at 8:00 P.M. Sometimes it's sad if she is sleeping when I get home and I can't see her. My schedule is valuable in Unique. There is not permission to leave early. My motivation is big. I feel the best when I'm learning English.

Katerin Sheyla Pimentel

Learning English is giving me a lot of confidence to be able to ask where certain things are or ask about places. It is definitely a process in which each word I learn helps me a lot. Every day we learn a little more.

Freshta Popal

The English classes change my life. When I came from Afghanistan to the United States, I didn't know how to use the words, how can I talk, but when I take English classes, it helps alot for me. Now I can talk easily. I can solve my problem.

Hameeda Popal

Learning English is very important. By learning English, I learned many things, and I can do some things. For example, I go to work. For any problem for my nephews in school. Also, I can go shopping, go to the park, and go to the library. I can drive easily. I can talk with somebody.

Shakila Qaderi

Where I grew up, the culture didn't allow girls to go to school. I lived my life like a blind person, I couldn't read or write and I didn't know what was going on the in the world.

When I came to the United States, my problems doubled, not knowing the language and the culture and being unable to read or write English. I depended on my husband and my kids to take me to buy a gallon of milk, for example. I couldn't go anywhere without them.

Since I started this English course, I have begun to recognize some English words and I can now read and write a little bit. I can go buy groceries by myself. I started getting to know English words in Diane's classes. She tried very hard to make sure every student understood what she was teaching. Miss Jackie and Miss Eva are always trying to help us learn. Miss Jane in the tutoring class helps me with my homework.

Rahimullah Qasimi

When I come to America, I did not know any English. It was very hard for me to go out and do anything. After starting English classes, I can now read signs and follow addresses on a map. I can go to the bank and buy groceries. By learning English, I can now talk with people at a store. I can greet people in my community.

Atefa Rahimi

My name is Atefa Rahimi. I am from Afghanistan, when my family and I came to the US. I was nervous because English was my new language when I started learning English at the English Empowerment Center. By learning English, I can make doctor appointments, shop, and help my children with homework. Thanks to my teachers: Ms. Cynthia and Ms. Sandy.

Atefa Rahimi

My name is Atefa Rahimi. I am from Afghanistan. When me and my family came to the US, I was nervous. Because English was my new language. And I didn't communication in English. After I started learning [at] the English [Empowerment] Center, my life is [changed] and I am happy because I can [make a] doctor's appointment. I can shop and return and exchange items. Help my children with their homework. I am comfortable.

Shaista Momand Rahmani

It has been 5 months since I came to the United States.

When I first came to the United States, I was happy and excited. That moment is unforgettable for me.

I started EEC classes two months ago.

I have learned a lot from the EEC class during this time.

I have not yet had many experiences within school, work, or the community.

During this time, I only spoke with two ladies from church. They know my English is not good, but I try to talk more with them.

English helps me prepare for the permit exam, to get an appointment, and read and reply to emails. I watched a Hollywood movie and understood what they were saying. I found the ability to go to the mall for shopping and I can buy and return items without anyone helping me. Twice a week I take my son out for fun and I meet new people outside.

Learning English is changing my life because I believe language is power.

I started to learn English two months ago.

I have always believed this beautiful language will change my life and I believe that something wonderful is about to happen in my future.

I will never give up.

Samira Rami

English empowers me because I can now go on my own to the doctors and grocery stores without

any help. I have learned English and am still studying the English language to feel more comfortable in this country and getting to know the wonderful people who live here. I'm doing my best in order to qualify for a better job.

Yobany Ramos



I want to learn English to find a better job. I also want to know how to use a computer and learn how to speak with other people.

Mirsa Reyes

How has life changed with learning English? A very good question. When I arrived in this country, I did not know a word in English. It was very difficult for me to express my needs because I knew absolutely nothing. But I started to study and little by little I was learning, and now I know that English has helped me a lot. I still don't know how much more I need to learn, but little by little I am going to continue learning so that one day I can fully express myself.

Martha Reyes

I want to learn English to look for a job. I want to learn English to have a job. I want to learn English so I can communicate with other people. I want to learn English to support my son at school. I want to learn English because I want to speak fluently and be understood. I want to learn English to understand English songs and English books well.

Martha Maria Reyes

My name is Martha Reyes. I am from El Salvador. In the past, I didn't understand anything and it was very hard. The people would talk to me and my answer was "I'm sorry, I don't understand." I felt ashamed.

Learning English has changed my life, because it is very important to me. Now I can speak and understand English a little bit. My goal is to learn to write, read, and speak English. Thank you English Empowerment Center for your great teaching.

Wendy Rivera



When I came to the USA in 2017, I felt very sad because all my family still lived in El Salvador. I was in a different country with a different language. Sometimes I thought, when would the people around me understand me? I wished I understood what people were saying. One day, I decided to change and make my wishes a reality and search for information about English classes. Since that moment my life started to change step by step. Slowly I learned little things -- words, then creating little sentences. Now I feel more confident speaking and answering questions, and talking a little with other persons. I learned to listen and write more. Sometimes I think it is unreal, all the things I learned in this short time. Right now, I feel happy and excited. I want to learn more English. I hope one day I can make my wishes happen. My goals: get my GED, citizenship, and more job opportunities. I want to continue to make friends and communicate better with others in English. English is changing my life.

Lazaro Yoel Suarez Rodriguez

Learning English is very important in my life. I like it, but today I'm nervous to speak. Today I can buy my clothes, gas and food. The English classes helped me in my work. Today I can serve customers. I'm happy. Jakelline Rodriguez

To work. To better communicate with my doctor. To improve my knowledge. The possibility of connecting with more people.

Ramiro Romero

My English before was not good. Now I have some time to help with shopping, work, and family in my new country. I have more English to use in my life.

Job Romero

I can understand more. I can start a conversation. I can write more. I can participate in class. I can go to the store and buy. I can write a little in English. I can speak a little in English. It is easier to work. I have better pronunciation. I talk with other people. I can make more money. I have better opportunities for a job.

Eder Rosales

Well, learning English has been a new challenge for me this year, since it is very important to have good communication with people in this country. This will allow me to have new friends and better job opportunities. I went to the Herndon Community Center and I found this great opportunity. With the help of Professor Brian I know that I will learn the English language step by step.

Sara Rosales

Learning English has helped me get better opportunities at my job. Thank you for your support.

Marwa Sabery

Learning English is very important for me in my life.

Since I started learning English, I see a lot of changes about my communication with other people. Before I couldn't talk with my manager but now it's better than before. I can talk with him about my problems and my schedule and some other things. I can also talk with and understand my co-workers.

Before I couldn't communicate with others well but now I can. I had problems when I'd go to the hospital or had an appointment. After checking in they'd ask why I was there and I couldn't talk with them well. Now it's ok with me. I can solve my problems now.

And also, it's not enough for me - that's why I want to improve my English. I want to start my college in the future. I want to study information technology. I want to become an IT Specialist. Learning English will be very helpful for my college. I will be able to understand what I learn in class, what I have to do, how to prepare myself for class, how to communicate and understand my classmates and teachers.

Abdul Waris Safi

Before I came to the United States, I learned a little English in my country. But after I came to the United States, I saw the people speaking very fast and I didn't understand. This was my big problem. I felt very bad because I am new to the country. I need to communicate with people and get my driver's license and get a better job and find new friends.

After I took English class, I felt better. I can speak more and communicate with other people and can go every where, like the DMV, visit the doctor, etc.. And this is a good example that I can make a good life with English. And it is very necessary for people to know English in this country.

Soukaina Salfi

In the first week that I came to the United States, I worried about the English language. But some time passed and I managed to log in to an English school. Within a year I was able to speak a little English and I am still continuing to learn English until now. Because I am in dire need of it now that I have a daughter, I have to speak to her in English. Also I want to work. Generally speaking, I need English in my life here in the U.S. I came here with my husband to change my life and now there is a real change in my English level. This is thanks to the school and the teachers. It really is a wonderful thing.

Christy Salgado

Learning English Changed My Life!!

Hello my name is Christy and I am from Honduras. I arrived in the USA 6 months ago. When I arrived, I was a little scared because I did not speak English, and all the people who communicated with me did so in English.

That is why I made the decision to learn English. I work as a nanny and I learned a little from talking to my boss and the children. I learned a little from listening to music.

Then, I looked for online courses and I found the English Empowerment Center course. I took it and now I can understand and speak better when someone is speaking to me in English. I have learned words that I did not know. By listening when someone is speaking, I can understand what they are saying, something that was difficult for me to understand before.

Now I can say that learning English has changed my life because I can understand and speak a little with others in English. Now when I go to the store or the library, I can understand people.

My goal is to speak and understand the English language, because I would like to communicate with others and that when looking for a job the language is not a barrier for me.

Thank you for your dedication and help, I really appreciate that.

Elder Salvatierra

My name is Elder. I am from Central America. I have three beautiful children. I have been in the United States for 23 years.

Behishta Samadi

My name is Behishta Samadi. I am from Afghanistan. I have been living in the U.S. for 14 years. I am a U.S. citizen. Before learning English, I felt that my life was incomplete. I felt that I was missing something. But when I started learning English I felt that I have accomplished one of my major goals. By learning English, I could do many things. I can work, help my kids with their school work, I can do many things. Thank you very much!

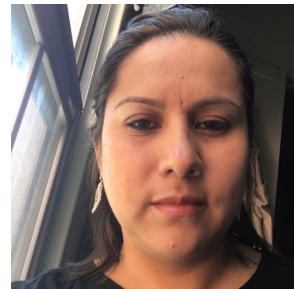
Adriana Sanchez

Learning English has had a profound impact on my life. Before I started learning English, I was limited in my ability to communicate with others.

By being able to speak and write in English, I have been able to communicate more effectively with my peers.

Learning English has allowed me to get a better job and speak with people around the world. English has helped me to build strong relationships with friends and my family. Overall, learning English has changed my life in countless ways.

Jacqueline Sandoval



Speaking English and writing it is one of my goals that I want to achieve and I believe that I am achieving it. I work with children and I feel that I can express myself a little more with them, with the work team, and the parents of a family. I have stopped being afraid to pronounce the words and I have confidence in myself. I want to keep learning more. It is very important for my future and I feel very happy with myself.

Ana Sandoval

My name is Ana Sandoval. I'm from Guatemala. I have ten years in this country. I have two children, a girl and a boy. I like animals, especially dogs. I have one called Nikke.

I want to learn English for my job and also for my daughter who is studying in second grade. In the United States, English is very important.

Sajia Shirzad Saraj



Speaking English changed my life in many ways. My doctor appointment. When I was pregnant, English helped me to tell my doctor I had pain. Now I have two amazing children. In the store, English helps me to ask where I can find things, and helps me to understand the answer. In the DMV, English helps me so I can take my permit. In the restaurant, English helps me to ask if there is a table for two people. In conclusion, I love learning English.

Fahima Satar

I have been in the United States for 4 months. Learning English will empower me to get a good job. I can go shopping and find what I need. I can chat with my classmates in class. The biggest challenge is that I was able to get my driver's license. I took my driving test on the computer. I can go to work after a while. When I go to work maybe I will find many friends and I can chat with them.

Tajuddin Sattari

I am from Afghanistan. I am 31 years old. I am learning English so that I can go to a university and get a better job in the future. And I can help in the future of my children's school. And can still make good friends in the future. Thanks.

Ana G. Sejas

When I came to the United States four years ago, I didn't understand English. I started to work at the restaurant as a waitress. I memorized the menu and started to speak English but at my second job, I spoke only Spanish. I read the newspaper, books, and watched TV in English and I learned many words. The first semester, I started my English class at the English Empowerment Center. I learned a lot and now I understand more grammar. I continued with the second semester.

I'm so happy because I'm learning more and my life is easier. I have a good teacher. English changed my life because now I talk with people, go to the grocery store, and I can read labels, etc.. If I learn more, my life in this country will be easier. If I have more time, maybe I can study to be a realtor.

Santiago Serna

Learning English changed my life in different ways. I can help tourists in my country when they don't speak Spanish. It isn't my job, but I enjoy helping people and practicing my speaking. I do it because I would like that people help me understand them if I stay in other countries where they don't speak Spanish or English. English is a universal language and wherever you go always you'll find somebody to speak it.

Also, I need to increase my skills for work. Talking and listening in English is very important to get a better job and communicate with American people. I'm a Social Worker and I have to interact with people all the time, so I have to speak their language fluently and clearly. I really hope I get an excellent job in the US. I want to contribute to the nation with my experience, skills and love for my profession.

I want to say thank you to the English Empowerment Center for the opportunity to learn and meet wonderful teachers, they are so dedicated, lovely and comprehensive. I'm really happy learning with them. It is very important to know different cultures because we have students from South and Central America, Asia and Africa. It is an interesting mix because you have to listen and speak in English all the time.

Naila Shabir

My name is Naila Shabir. I am from Pakistan. I was born in Pakistan and married in Pakistan. I have one child. He was born in Pakistan. We came here in September 2017. Almost 5 years [in the] United States of America. I have two sisters and brothers. I joined the class because I want to learn more English. My parents' language is Urdu. But in the U.S.A. I want to learn more English. I want to apply for citizenship. My teacher Kobi is a very nice person.

Zalia Sharifi

I couldn't read and write before. After this class, I can read and write. In this regard, this class is excellent.

"Then, I looked for online courses and I found the English Empowerment Center course. I took it and now I can understand and speak better when someone is speaking to me in English."

-Christy S., EEC Learner

Khyber Shinwari

How English Changed My Life

As English is an international language, it is necessary for everyone to learn it. When I came to America one year ago, everything was new for me. The language, culture, making doctor's appointments, getting my driver's license, finding a good job, talking to people, and finding an address were all challenging for me. I started my first English course in the church because I had economic problems. I wanted to work and I could not continue to study English. Now I am studying at the English Empowerment Center and have learned a lot. By studying English, I was able to pass my driving test and get my favorite job as a Crisis Supporter Assistant, working with the mentally disabled.

Uranus Siddiqi

Before I could not speak English, but now I can speak English. My life has changed a lot by learning English. When I go shopping, I can solve my problems. Or when my son and my daughter have an appointment, I can talk to their doctor, and I can tell all their problems. Sometimes, I speak English with my son.

Ana Siles



Hello, my name is Ana Siles and I want to tell you that the English classes are changing my life because now, I can better understand people who speak English. So, I have better and greater participation with my children's teachers at school. I can watch movies and programs in English, with subtitles. It is true that I still do not understand 100%, but I am on my way to it. Thank you English Empowerment Center for the opportunity you give me. I will have a better future and it is thanks to you.

Celia Siles

Conversation. Reading. Writing. Listening. I want to learn English because it helps me at the doctor, with friends, shopping, and speaking with the teacher of my daughters.

Abadullah Sofizada

English helped my work. English helped my shopping. English helps when I visit the hospital. English helps me every day. English helps me in English class. English helps me with my computer work. I like watching TV and using my phone.

Alfredo H. Soto

Practice. Write. Read. Listen. Talking.

I want to learn English for speaking with people at work, the hospital, and communicating with them.

Saven Sroeun



My name is Saven Sroeun and I am from Cambodia. I arrived in the USA in November 2014. I am one of the students at the James Lee Community Center. I am proud of myself. I have learned to speak more English. English has helped me with my friends, school, and to be able to communicate a little better with other people also. I have lost the fear. I feel more comfortable to speak English now. Thank you to my teacher, Laurie, and all the staff.

William S. Turcios

It's totally changing me since I learned English. I have a new life, because I opened a door in my path. I have new friends. I have more conversations with my children. I speak more conversations with people at work. I talk more with the teacher in class. I speak more conversations with people in my class. I write more English than before. I talk more when I go to the store. Since I arrived in this country 15 years ago, I have always wanted to study English, but obstacles always appeared until I decided to study English. My life is changing little by little.

Camila Valdez



Before learning English I felt awful, because I couldn't understand anything. When someone said to me, "Hi! How are you?" I responded "Yes!" Since taking English class, I can respond better. I understand when someone says "Hi" to me or asks my name or simple questions. By learning English, I can communicate in my job in the store, and I can understand when someone calls me on the phone in English. Now that I speak English, I feel happy!

Marly Coto Villanueva

Not knowing English limits you, even to go to the store and order something to eat. Since I took English classes, I have learned to socialize better. I have new friends.

By learning English, I can be involved at my son's school and with people at work. My goal is to reach the stars. Thanks you very much for helping me achieve my goal.

Marthun Kebede Wondayu

Before learning English, I felt bad, I was scared to speak any words. I am thinking that I was always making mistakes; it's not coming out properly. I can't pronounce it well. I can't even hear when there are so many problems.

When I learned English, now I could listen better and speak better. When I have found a new job, I made new friends. I could read well. I try to help my children learn from home. I got my drivers license, and I can go shopping.

Learning English has helped me learn to do things such as communicating with my co-workers and meeting new people. Speaking English, I can be involved in more conversations and volunteer at the community library, and vote.

I know I'm not perfect at speaking yet, but thank you to the wonderful community for teaching me. So now I can understand and communicate with others.

Jian Miao Xia

Learning English has changed my life because now I can go shopping and ask the clerk questions. I like Costco. When I go to the mall, I go to Tysons. Learning English will help me find a better job and a better position. I am a supermarket worker. I want to be a manager. I want to manage people. Learning English will help me have better life in the US. It will be better because I can make more money. Learning English will help me become an American citizen. I can become a citizen when my English gets better.

Xiao Chen Yang

I've been thinking about writing this story for a long time. I came to the United States twenty years ago. Because of my poor English, I can't communicate with others. I feel shy. I was learning English in China, but it was boring. Since I came to the United States I am taking English classes. I have made many new friends and learned new technologies. By learning English I can now communicate at work and pay my own bills. I think my speaking English is much better than before. Thanks to all my teachers and I will student English harder in the future.

Juyeon Yoo

I am from South Korea. Korean is the language in Korea. Just now, I live in Falls Church. I moved 2 years ago.

I think English is difficult, but I must learn English. I want to learn English to skill upgrade. My daughters are in 2nd grade and kindergarten. I study English [at the English Empowerment Center]. I am learning English changes my life. I am able to do small talk to my neighbors and my children's teacher. I read the English books to my children. I am [getting] information. Finally, I live comfortably in Falls Church. I continuously learn English. I want to live more comfortably in the U.S.A.. Thank you.

Shabana Younas

My name is Shabana Younas. I am from Pakistan. I was born in Pakistan. I was married in Pakistan. I have 4 children. 2 born in Pakistan and 2 born in the U.S.A. We came here in August 2017. Almost 5 years [in the] United States of America. I have 2 sisters and 2 brothers. I joined English class because I want to learn more English. My parents language is Urdu. But [in the] U.S.A. I want to learn more English. I want to apply for citizenship. My teacher Kobi is a very nice person.

Dolores Zacarias

Now I practice and learn everyday. I follow three YouTube channels. Learning English, I am able to go to a store. Above all, learning English gives you an opportunity in a better job field. It is something new that you are learning. It makes you happy and that motivates you to be able to move forward.

Carlos Zavala



Before learning English I felt afraid because I didn't know English. Since taking English class, I'm not afraid to speak to people. I can speak English at work. Now that I've learned English, I can speak to my brothers in English. Now that I speak English, I feel better.

James Zhao

Learning English changed my life because I learned English and I found my job.

My job is a driver for the adult medical care day center. Every day I talk with the old people.

English helped me pass the driver's license test so I could get this job.

I can simply talk to my boss and friends. I can read some information. I can go shopping to the supermarket. English has helped me start my new life.

Asma Zia

I am learning English now. I can read, write, talk, and help my child with his homework. I can make a doctor's appointment and I can also do a job search. I studied the driving manual and got my driver's license. I can go shopping alone and solve problems by myself. I am happy with my progress and my goal is to be a teacher in the future.

Gilmer Zuniga



Hello. My name is Gilmer and I am learning English because I think I need it for communication in all the places, for example - in my work, hospital, police, and shopping. I am happy now because I can communicate better. But now I need to learn more.

Yin Zuokui



I came to the United States from China in April 2022. Because of language difficulties, I felt like a deaf and mute person in this new country. Living in my daughter's home. I was afraid of going out alone, shopping alone, or visiting tourist attractions alone. After learning English for nearly one year at the English Empowerment Center, I can now confidently communicate with others and shop alone. I can also use my computer to search for useful information on the Internet to learn English. When I encounter difficulties in traveling, I can ask others for help. At present, my English Level is Level 2, and my goal is to complete Level 3 as soon as possible, so that I can find an ideal job and live alone with my wife. I also want to learn more [about] the culture, history and legal system of the United States and become a law-abiding citizen of the United States.

Outstanding Instructor Recognitions

Each year, English Empowerment Center learners are invited to thank their instructors by nominating them for an Outstanding Instructor Recognition. EEC thanks every instructor for their hard work, and for their dedication and passion for adult literacy. Enjoy these words straight from our learners.

Teachers: Ameer Ghaderi and Jan Auerbach
Student: Dana Lee

Teacher Jan Auerbach is passionate about teaching students and prepares other stories besides the textbooks we learn so that we can learn new things. And gives every student a chance. Teacher Ameer Ghaderi helps us to study comfortably.

Teacher: Jan Auerbach
Student: Tajuddin Sattari

They explain the lesson [well].

Teachers: Ida Draim and Stacey Becker
Student: Vasantha Komakula

Both my teachers work hard. They have good teaching skills. Very understanding, encourages us. Clarify all the doubts.

Teachers: Elizabeth Stone and Molly Bensinger-Lacy
Student: Raquel Gonzalez

They are very responsible and work hard. Very professional, [and they] inspire me to do better. Your positive attitude and willingness to help make a huge difference thank you!

Teachers: Elizabeth Stone, Janice Linett, and Molly Bensinger-Lacy
Student: Jinsun Kim

Mrs. Molly and Mrs. Elizabeth are the best I've ever seen. They are the best team. This class is very helpful for me. They have taught me with passion. They prepare the materials perfectly. I especially admire Mrs. Molly's enthusiasm for our class. I think it is the best ESOL class for immigrants.

Mrs. Janice's book club is very useful for me. This class is free, but she always prepares the lessons perfectly. This class is a good opportunity to improve my writing and reading skills.

Teacher: Banhi Bhattachanya
Student: Nelly Guaman

Ms. Banhi is an excellent teacher and a very good person who takes her time to teach us and explain to us if we do not understand what she is explaining to us. My teacher explains to us one by one until we can understand and for that I am very grateful to my teacher.

Teacher: Heather Brooks
Student: Hajera Aryobi

Teacher [is] good and happy. Excellent.

Teacher: Heather Brooks
Student: Ramesh Kabiri

My teacher [is] very good.

Teacher: Heather Brooks
Student: Zulma Rogel

Teacher is very nice. Teacher is very kind. Teacher happy. Excellent teacher.

Teacher: Heather Brooks
Student: Noorzia Sabery

She is a great teacher.

Teachers: Jody Sweet, Chris Cox, Albert Turri, and Krista Carlson
Student: Samira Rami

Because they explain things in a simple and easily understandable manner.

Teachers: Jody Sweet and Krista Carlson
Student: Jacqueline Sandoval

Excellent teacher.

Teacher: Kobi Carter

Student: Anonymous

Because she is an excellent teacher, who teaches and explains the classes well. She is an excellent person.

Teacher: Kobi Carter

Student: Norma Esperanza Barahona Reyes

This is my best recommendation because they are teachers who help us learn a lot of English for a better future for this country and any job and thus be able to help people who need it. Thank you teacher and the entire community for supporting us to improve a good language. Blessings.

Teacher: Kobi Carter

Student: Katy Cruz

She is an excellent teacher. She explains very well. She is dedicated to what she does. She does an excellent job. She motivates us to continue learning more, because one finds it difficult. She makes it look easy.

Teacher: Kobi Carter

Student: Rosibel Gomez Martinez

I recommend teacher, Kobi, for being such an excellent teacher in this quarter. I learned a lot from the teaching she gave me during the class. I want to have her as a teacher again in the following quarter that they give us. Thank you for your help.

Teacher: Kobi Carter

Student: Ana Evelyn Sandoval

Because she is an excellent teacher and shows interest in teaching us. She is always an active person, willing to teach. She has a lot of patience with us.... I recommend her as an excellent person.

Teacher: Marie Cavanaugh

Student: Mohammad Hussain Ibrahim

She was a great teacher.

Teacher: Stan Citron

Student: Uzma Asif

He is professional. He is very organized. His method of teaching is quite friendly and interactive.

Teacher: Stan Citron

Student: Arianys Vergara

He is very kind, patient, and I am really learning a lot with him.

Teachers: Margaret Gregory, Benita Stocks, and Stan Citron

Student: May Elnajdy

My teachers deserve recognition for their dedication, patience, and cheerfulness in teaching. They go above and beyond to help us improve our language skills and inspire us to become better learners. I feel comfortable speaking and sharing my ideas in their classes, and they are always friendly and approachable. Their passion for teaching has had a significant impact on my learning journey, and I am grateful for their guidance and support. I highly appreciate their efforts and believe they truly deserve recognition.

Teachers: Jacqueline Davey, Elizabeth Merritt, Henry Collins, and Jackie Corkins

Student: Rose Nguyen

My favorite teachers names are Jackies, Lisa and Henry. They teach English. They are very kind and humble persons. They always help us [with] different words and explain everything very simply. They treat all students equal. They also give us candies on any big holiday. I am so happy when I [found] this class. I try to come online; listen carefully and do more homework. I pray to god to bless them with wealth, health and prosperity.

Teacher: Jackie Corkins

Student: Alba Ayala

Hello, My name is Alba. I think teacher[s] have to do hard work with the students.

Teacher: Jackie Corkins

Student: Ana Evelyn Medina Villafuerte

I would like the teacher Jackie to be recognized for the work [she does with her] students. I like the way she teaches the class. She explains the exercises in detail and if we don't understand, she comes back and repeats them until we understand the meanings. She has great patience with us and always has a smile towards us. Thank you very much for your attention. God bless us.

Teachers: Stacey Becker and Ida Draim

Student: Katty Caceres

These teachers are incredible because they are teaching me to feel more confidence when I speak English in the class and all the time they are recognizing my achievements.

Teachers: Stacey Becker and Ida Draim

Student: Adila Jawadi

I am satisfied with my teachers, their teaching is excellent, especially in grammar. I am really grateful to them.

Teachers: Stacey Becker, Ann Niederpruem Anderson, and Ida Draim

Student: Zinet Legesse

There are lots of reasons to be thankful for teachers: their support, their kindness, their ability to teach us, and of course, their dedication. In fact, not everyone is aware of the more unusual efforts teachers make for their students.

They support their students through the toughest times. They are hardworking.

Teachers: Stacey Becker, Ann Niederpruem Anderson, and Ida Draim

Student: Elaha Qadeer Ranjbar

It was very helpful when they were teacher of the class, I learned from them along the way. They are very impressive to help students to improve their learning abilities. I really appreciate them and other teachers for helping us! You all did a great job! Thank you!

Teachers: Ann Anderson and Ida Draim

Student: Marta Keno

I believe that my teachers should be recognized because they work hard on perfecting my English. Not only that, but they have also exposed me to American culture and holidays that I had never heard before. I have also enjoyed their teaching style; I was able to perfect my English much better than I had expected. They are also extremely patient when it comes to explaining things we misunderstood. Along with that they are exceedingly encouraging, they are always appreciative when the other students and I answer. And it is for these reasons why I strongly believe that they deserve to be recognized for what they do.

Teacher: Marcia Dursi

Student: Sadia Haidari

Dear teacher, wishing you a divine success. For those who teach, it is not a job and work, but love. Thank you.

Teacher: Marcia Dursi

Student: Eun Joo Cho

At the first time, I felt that our teacher looked nice and gentle. During class, she taught us as if we were kids. When we made some mistakes such as wrong answers and misunderstanding, she [gave] us right answers and took her time for us to understand. She led us to concentrate on our English study.

I think that my teacher Ms. Marcia Dursi is polite and considerate towards our students. She taught me how to read some books, to speak English and to use skills of writing. I feel she does her best to teach our students more and more.

Teacher: Marcia Dursi

Student: Soojin Lee

Before taking this class, I wondered if I could take a class with an American teacher. But the idea is very wrong. Because the teacher is completely suitable for our class. When we ask questions, she answers each individual with an example. She makes us take interest in class and work hard. She gives courage and keep this class. I respect the first American English teacher I met. I'm sure Marcia Dursi should be recognized.

I have been taking English class with Marcia Dursi since last semester until now. She is kind and explains well in class so I can understand. Level 3 has students from various countries, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Korea while people from different cultures and languages study English with teacher. The teacher Marci Dursi makes us study with understanding and caring for each other. As I learn English, I get to know each country's culture and it's fun to study them. Teacher Marcia Dursi is the best teacher for English Empowerment Center Level 3.

Teacher: Lori Farnsworth

Student: Malika Faiza

My teacher Lori always comes to class before us. She listens to us and encourages us. She gives us time and tries with us. She is a good teacher and I want to study English with her in the future. Thank you, Lori and Eliza.

Teacher: Adrienne Grossman

Student: Anonymous

The teacher is a very good person and helps us in our class and is very affectionate. The other teachers are very good [people].

Teachers: Maryanne Knockenhauer and Connie Hauer

Student: Alina Qazi

These teachers are teaching really good English. I really like the way they teach us English. I really liked the English game. I learned a lot from it.

Teacher: Adam Hayes

Student: Ainullah Malyar

He is great.

Teacher: Amira Ibrahim

Student: Victor Chumpen

This teacher should be recognized because she makes us understand when she teaches the English class. She is aware of whether or not we have understood the material and helps us participate in the class individually and in groups.

Teacher: Amira Ibrahim

Student: Blanca Garcia

Amira is a very good teacher. She has patience with us and thank you for the time you spend with us. She teaches us to work as a team. I like that because she makes us participate in each activity. She is an excellent teacher. Thanks so much.

Teachers: Ameer Ghaderi, Ken Portnoy, and Sue Jacob

Student: Khadija Kashify

These teachers teach us so [well] and they explain lessons so easily for us that we can understand the lessons they teach us. [They are] friendly. I like their teaching methods.

Teachers: Ken Portnoy and Sue Jacob

Student: Sona Masoud

Sue is professional in teaching and she tries her best to teach students. Ken is friendly and explains until you get the answer.

Teachers: Jody Sweet and Linda Johnsen

Student: Lizeth Vega

Kind and dedicated [people who] provide an excellent education.

Teacher: Linda Johnsen

Student: Jamshid Mirzabae

As far as I know, my teacher has a long teaching experience. She is a professional in her work.

Teacher: Maryanne Knockenhauer

Student: Shaista Ahmadi

She is very great teacher. I understand her teaching very well and she put her all effort [to] teach in [a] better way so every one understands. She always make sure every one understands the lesson.



A student receives a computer orientation as a part of EEC's laptop lending program.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Elleni Abate

His hard work teaching [helps me] learn English, but I need more and more days please. Thank you.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Bibi Khadija Asaulma

My teacher is happy.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Ramish Kabiri

My teacher [is teaching] very well.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Scarleth Maldonado

He makes every class very easy and fun. He helps us one on one with examples. He explains step by step and wants us all to learn. I hope to see you on the other levels. Never change. You're the best teacher.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Latifa Nawid

My teacher is John. He is teaching English. He has full knowledge of his subject. His method of teaching is very interesting and impressive. He loves all his students. He always wears simple and clean clothes. He is very learned. He always helps every student. He likes discipline and well-disciplined students. He never makes any distinction and difference between the students. He never discourages any students. I have great regard for him because he always leads the students on the right path. I am very grateful for having such a teacher in my life.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Zulma Rogel

Because my teacher is very kind. My teacher is excellent. My teacher is very nice. My teacher explains the classes very well.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Bibi Zahiab Sharifi

My teacher is good at teaching.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Hafsa Siddiri

He is very nice and well behaved. He is very patient with students and he is easy to understand. Our teacher is also always on time.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Celia Siles

He deserves to be recognized because he is an excellent teacher who has the patience to teach, commitment, and vocation to his students. He is also a very kind person and a good friend of all who cares that we all learn.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Mario Tordoya

My teacher must be recognized for his teaching, the time with us and his patience with the students. Thank you for teaching us English.

Teacher: John Koubaroulis
Student: Sara

My teacher is good at teaching.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Malaya Ahmadi

Her teaching method is perfect for understanding.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Al Alshafei

I am a student of yours. I would like to thank you for all the effort you make to the students to convey information to the minds of the students. Finally, I would like to say that you are an amazing and wonderful teacher in everything. Thank you.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Muzhgan Ayar

Because they are very good and excellent, especially the teacher. Cassie Kramer is unique and special and I love her very much.

Teacher Cassie Kramer is excellent. She is always trying to be a good teacher. She is coming on time.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Yordanos Gebreyohanes

Ms. Cassie is a good teacher. She helps you when you need it. She is super nice to everybody. She is the best teacher.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Anisa Jan

My teacher is the best. She always comes on time. She is very kind and helpful. She is the best teacher in Virginia. She is very friendly. Thank you so much Mrs. Cassandra.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Juan Carlos Medina

Cassie has a teaching method that is very practical, clear and effective. She has a very precise way of explaining each topic. She is didactic and her teaching scheme is easy to understand. She is very respectful and always explains to you in a cheerful and cordial way.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Rukhsar Nia

My teacher is very nice.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Niyireth Ouiroga

Cassie deserves to be recognized for her love of the teaching profession. She is a very friendly person and uses different methods that help us to understand the language. I think she is an excellent teacher.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Hameeda Popal

Teacher Cassie is a patient and good teacher. I like her teaching. She teaches the easy way. She works hard to get students to understand and write. Cassie has work experience in the teaching department. I hope to be happy and successful.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Juana Vargas

For being a person of principles: honest, friend, loyal, with a fighting spirit, with a vocation for service, faithfully fulfilling her other responsibilities.

Teacher: Cassandra Kramer
Student: Marlen Welcher

The teacher [is] very nice.

Teachers: Marie Tibor, Tanya Taveras, Marie Cavanaugh, and Cassandra Kramer
Student: Adila Jawadi

Yes, they are really good teachers. Their lessons are really great. I am really grateful to them.

Teachers: Marie Cavanaugh and Cassandra Kramer
Student: Tamara Albetar

I think that the teachers deserve to be recognized because they work hard to teach us English and they try their best to make us learn.

Thank you teacher for helping us to learn English.

Teachers: Michelle Lowe and Jennifer Kronovet
Student: Wahida Ayar

Jennifer Kronovet and Michelle Lowe are my teachers. They are excellent teachers. They are teaching very very good and they are coming to the online class on time too. I like both of them.

Teacher: Janice Lloyd
Student: Anonymous

Thanks to the teachers for their time. You are making a huge impact. We are so very proud of you! I truly appreciate you.

Teacher: Janice Lloyd
Student: Salamatou Karimou

My teachers make learning fun and interesting and they are patient with us. They both answer questions whenever we ask. Ms. April is funny and makes us laugh. Ms. Janice pushes us to do our best. We appreciate them for their dedication and hard work.

Teachers: April Williams, Christina McCloskey, and Janice Lloyd
Student: Dinh Le

I am going to talk about April, Janice and Christina. They are the best English teachers [in my] hometown, because they help me to do my exercise, they give me knowledge and believe in me, they make me love English, they are social and friendly, [and] they are sweet people who are kind and loving to all students. I [am] always grateful for everything they have taught me. I love my teachers very much. Thank you for being patient and support [my improvement].

Teachers: Jennifer Kronovet and Michelle Lowe
Student: Tajuddin Sattari

The teachers teach us well and better. We are satisfied with them.

Teacher: Natasha Marple
Student: Isabel Marquez

I would like to recommend Ms. Natasha for this award because of her outstanding teaching methods. She always uses sign language and gestures when speaking or explaining and uses actual examples so that we can remember each word. Her dynamic personality and hard work makes each class fun, interesting and useful. I am so thankful to her because learning English is vital to be successful. Thank you also to Ms. Natasha's helpers, Bill and Joseph. Everyone works so hard together to help us.



Student speaker, Manuel Z., at EEC's A Taste of Literacy 2023.

Teacher: Jill Martin
Student: Camila Valdez

Because I think she has experience in what she does, her classes are very dynamic from the moment we enter class until we leave. She is very patient and friendly. She always makes all of her students participate. I always feel good about my English when I leave class, since she teaches me, I feel that I am learning and that makes me very happy.

Teachers: Jackie Park and Jean McCarthy
Student: Steve Chun

My teacher Jackie Park and Jean McCarthy are good teachers. Learning in my class is very good. I want to continue this class with the same teachers. Jackie is a very good teacher and happy everytime. We thank them very much.

Teachers: Jackie Park and Jean McCarthy
Student: Suk Lee

I am studying Beginning English level 1, starting February 13, 2023. [For a] long time I have a fear about English, when speaking and writing. My teacher Jackie Park and Jean McCarthy give me confidence to be able to participate with my neighbor in English.

Teachers: Jackie Park and Jean McCarthy
Student: Uranus Saddiqi

We have two teachers. My first teacher is Jackie Park and my second teacher is Jean McCarthy. They are very kind women. My teachers try very hard to teach us English. I am so happy because I have good teachers in the class. They are very intelligent teachers.

Teacher: Kathy McCleary
Student: Bangjin Cha

She prepares well for class. She interacts with the students and teaches. She has the empathy to understand the situation of immigrants.

Teacher: Bill Meara
Student: Maria Portillo

For his patience to teach, creativity, empathy, dynamic, persistent, motivating, respectful.

Teachers: Stan Citron, Tou Xiong, and Corrie Paeglow
Student: Warocha Tantranon

They are very inspired when they teach. Teacher Corrie always brings us updated topics to talk [about] in the class and [is] very calm to listen to every student. Teacher Stan has prepared his class agenda and teaching materials a lot for students. Teacher Tou Xiong assists in class very well and always gives techniques related to topic questions after the assignments are done.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Muna Ali

I like my teacher, Jackie because I learn English and learn other information. She helps me to speak more English. She works slow enough for everybody to learn. She is nice and helps me with homework. She prepares before class. I also like my tutors.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Luisa Arce

Jackie is patient in explaining the lesson. We understand the lessons using the book and researching on the internet. She makes us all understand and speak correctly. I honestly like how to use strategies and be able to speak. She is a prepared teacher.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Mina Ayobi

Jackie is a very good and smart teacher. You learn many things. It brings didactic material. By learning English, now I can read, write, and speak nicely. It helps me understand a little more at work. I like to read and study every day English.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Eunice Carvajal

Jackie is an excellent teacher. She is very dedicated to her work. She uses materials to help us learn. She arrives early to class and is attentive and kind to the students and if someone does not understand, she explains again and reassures them. I see a lot of care in her so that all of us learn English.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Elleni Chun

My teachers are very kind. They help me understand English easily so I learn a lot. Thank you to both teachers. They are fantastic.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Jung Ja Cho

The teacher teaches well so that we can understand. She is very kind.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Alba Herrera

Even though I don't speak English, I come to school to learn. My three teachers are good and creative and they make the class very nice.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Miseon Jeong

The teacher explains well in an easy to understand way. The teacher makes practice questions. So, she makes it easy for me to study.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Aziza Khan

I love my teachers. My teachers help me when I'm stuck on something. They teach me new words everyday. I can read and write now and I respect my teachers a lot. Teachers are the greatest gift from God. They guide the students for the future. They help build the character of the students.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Lilian Mejia

Teacher Jackie should be recognized for her intelligence and ability to give us English classes and thanks to her and the other teachers. We have been learning little by little. Jackie has been one of the best teachers because of her good energy. She makes things more understandable and is an excellent teacher.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Berna Montanez

I recommend Miss Jackie for her good teaching method.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Rahimullah Qaderi

Our teacher has been good from the first day. I am so thankful to her because of her way of teaching and I have learned a lot. She is always on time and helpful to all of us.

Teacher: Jackie Park
Student: Shaklla Qaderi

Jackie is our main teacher. She is trying her best to make sure every student understands and learns and her assistants Eva and Dianne also help me understand new English words everyday I am in the classroom. Thank you Miss Jackie.

Teachers: Kay Xiong and Janet Pauling
Student: Wahida Ayar

They teach very well. They are present in the lessons. Because their teaching is excellent. They start the lesson [on] time. They explain correctly.

Teachers: Kay Xiong and Janet Pauling
Student: Adriana Sanchez

They are good teachers. They have a good class sequence. They have patience.

Teachers: Lori Farnsworth and Eliza Savage
Student: Maria Eugenia Font de Siero

My teachers Lori and Eliza are excellent English teachers. I am happy in their class. Their class is dynamic for practice, reading, and writing. This English class is very interactive. The time I spend in class is excellent. Thank you.

Teachers: Kathy McCleary, Janice Linett, Laurie Tracy, and Karen Schroth
Student: Jinsun Kim

They are very friendly and they prepare a lot of materials besides textbooks. Assistant teachers also try to teach with enthusiasm in breakout groups. This class is useful for me.

Teachers: Robin Lundgren and Maura Sleevei
Student: Gulnara Minisyamova

Because thanks to my teachers I improve my English. When I started [the] course I couldn't speak well, but now I feel a difference. Their kindness, professionalism and teaching, all these help me and another student learn English.

Teacher: Maura Sleevei
Student: Ana Orellana

They deserve it because she is kind. She teaches very well. Lastly she has lots of patience.

Teachers: Sandy Olson, Robin Lundgren, and Maura Sleevei
Student: Marwa Sabery

She is so kind and caring to us. She is very helpful and understanding with us. And also she is always on time with principle.

Teachers: Robin Lundgren and Maura Sleevei
Students: Angela Xiomara Castro Duran

I am very grateful to teacher Maura, because she is a great person. She is very patient, loving, charitable and always supports us during classes. I want to express my gratitude and affection for teaching me the language. I want to express my gratitude [to] Miss Robin because she supports us in class and always had a big smile.

Teachers: Robin Lundgren and Maura Sleevei
Student: Christy Salgado

I am impressed by the way Miss Maura and Robin teach English class. They are incredible. In a short time I have managed to learn to pronounce words better and little by little I have lost the fear of speaking with other people in English. I am very grateful for the teachers who touched me. I love the games we play in class and the easy way in which they teach us the English language. I love them.

Teachers: Robin Lundgren and Maura Sleevei
Student: Fahima Satar

Because [they are] very good teachers and kind teachers. Our professors are very kind and friendly with us.

Teacher: Larry Sloan
Student: Alexia Acho

Larry is an excellent teacher who helps us a lot during the classes. He helps us better understand words and what they mean in Spanish because he speaks a little Spanish. We write in our notebooks and [he] always wants us to ask questions during class. We practice with partners. He's a very cheerful teacher during class and is always willing to help us.

Teacher: Larry Sloan
Student: Wilerkis Duran Pina

Larry deserves to be recognized for his good ways of teaching and explaining. Also for his patience, sympathy and dedication.

Teacher: Larry Sloan
Student: Marilly Coto

Hello, my name is Marilly. I am in level 1 English at Lincolnia. This is the first time taking courses and I have the pleasure of having Larry. He really tries to help us not only during class but when we are not in class by using the Whatsapp group sending us short exercises that help us a lot. I deeply appreciate your interest, respect and time to help us so that in the future we can speak English. Thank you very much Larry.

Teacher: Larry Sloan
Student: Sadrac Morales

I am a level 1 student and I recommend Larry Sloan as a wonderful teacher who shows respect for all his students.

Teacher: Larry Sloan
Student: Joaquin Yohun

Larry deserves to be recognized for his good way of teaching and explaining. He is patient and dedicated.

Teachers: Sandy Olson and Cynthia Steffens
Student: Ebthal Elbashir

The way they teach is beautiful and understandable. My teachers are very beautiful. I'm happy with them and learned a lot from them. I thank them for their effort and hard work with us. Thank you so much.

Teachers: Oorvi Budhwar and April Williams
Student: Ruby Ortega

You are a good teacher. You teach well. [You] are very charming. You are friendly and responsible. You are good people, and you are kind. You are excellent teachers. It was very [fun] studying with us, so I recommend both of you always. Because it is necessary to have a good teacher. It was a good class for me. Blessings dear teachers. Thank you so much.

Teacher: Abigail Zarzar
Student: Bibi Khadija Asoulmal

My teacher is good.

Teacher: Abigail Zarzar
Student: Ramish Kabiri

My teacher is very good.

Teacher: Abigail Zarzar
Student: Zulma Rogel

Ms. Abigail is sweet. Ms. Abigail helps me when I don't understand. Ms. Abigail is very nice. Ms. Abigail is happy.

Teacher: Abigail Zarzar
Student: Zainab Sharifi

My teacher is good at teaching.

Teacher: Abigail Zarzar
Student: Sara

My teacher is good at teaching.



English Empowerment Center Family Learning Program class

Outstanding Student Recognitions

The English Empowerment Center's adult English language learners come from 90 different countries and speak over 50 different languages. EEC's instructors have the opportunity to celebrate some of these remarkable learners with these Outstanding Student Recognitions.

Student: Janneth Arispe
Teacher: James Falcone

Janneth has been an outstanding student. She has had 100% attendance, always does the homework, and has worked hard. Her English has improved quite a bit. She has been a pleasure to have in the class.

Student: Arlen Aviles
Teacher: James Falcone

Arlen has been an outstanding student. He has had 100% attendance, always does the homework, and has worked hard. His English has improved quite a bit. It has been a pleasure to have him in the class.

Student: Ana Ayala
Teacher: Kathleen McCleary

Ana is a very bright, professional, conscientious student. She never missed a class. She did every homework assignment, and asked good questions. She was a lawyer in her home country (Bolivia) and hopes to learn English well enough to work in the legal field here. Ana has two young children, so the fact that she made it to class three nights a week for 12 weeks is really impressive. She also has a good sense of humor and a ready smile, and was always willing to help other students. She tackled every task in class with a positive attitude, even if it was outside her comfort zone (like performing a dialogue). I know Ana has a bright, bright future in the U.S.

Student: Wahida Ayar
Teachers: Janet Pauling and Elizabeth Nelson

I'm recommending her because she was advanced, but also mindful, eager to assist other students without being asked, considerate and committed.

Student: Mina Ayobi
Teacher: Jackie Park

Mina is a very dedicated student and always comes to class early. She started her level 1 class two semesters ago and I remember she was shy at the beginning of the semester and did not talk that much. However, she has improved a lot as the time goes by, always does her homework thoroughly, and gets along well with other peers. Mina also works very hard and participates regularly in class. It is our pleasure to have her in our class.

Student: Kaori Azuma
Teacher: Valerie Sutter

Arrives on time, is hard working and always focused on the day's lesson. Kaori is friendly, and helpful to other students in the class.



Beginning English level 3 students talking at their end of session celebration.

Student: Zenaida Bastidas de Pacheco
Teacher: Valerie Sutter

Zenaida always has a positive influence in our class: always smiling, engaging and socializing with other students. She takes a bus to get to class yet is always on time. She works attentively to improve her English skills. She often stays after class to work as a volunteer in the EEC office.

Student: Erick Benitez
Teacher: Kathleen McCleary

Erick made it to more than 90% of all classes, even though he works full time as an electrician. Erick works hard on his English and his speaking and comprehension skills were at the high end of the range for our class, so he willingly worked with other students to help them. While taking our class, he also passed his licensing test to get his electrician's license in Maryland. He even gave some students rides to and from class. Erick is very smart, always cheerful, and a terrific student.

Student: Elizabeth Berryman
Teachers: Karen Schroth and Kathleen McCleary

Elizabeth never misses class. And that's good because she has lots of things to share with her classmates. Her enthusiasm for her life in the US is infectious. She often volunteers to assist the teacher with administrative or co-teaching duties during class. We are thankful to have Elizabeth brightening each and every class meeting on Zoom.

Student: Dinara Borodina
Teacher: Valerie Sutter

Dinara's involvement in our class is energizing for all...students and teachers! Her positive attitude and enthusiasm are very influential. She has made impressive progress in Level 3 and has earned the status of "graduate": congratulations!

Student: Marina Canales
Teacher: Bill Meara

Marina is very dedicated to learning English. Her attendance is the best in the class. She always turns in homework. And she makes use of every minute in the classroom, often asking insightful questions that help the entire group. She is a wonderful student.

Student: Gilbert Chavez
Teacher: Kathleen McCleary

Gilbert is a smart, curious professional (he was an economist in his home country) who works very hard on his English in hopes of pursuing a career in accounting or economics here in the U.S. Gilbert is never afraid to ask good questions in class, or to try out new words and phrases. And he's a wonderful addition to any class because he is so attentive and a good partner to other students. We appreciate his gentle sense of humor, too.

Student: Eddy Cuellar Herrero
Teacher: Jackie Park

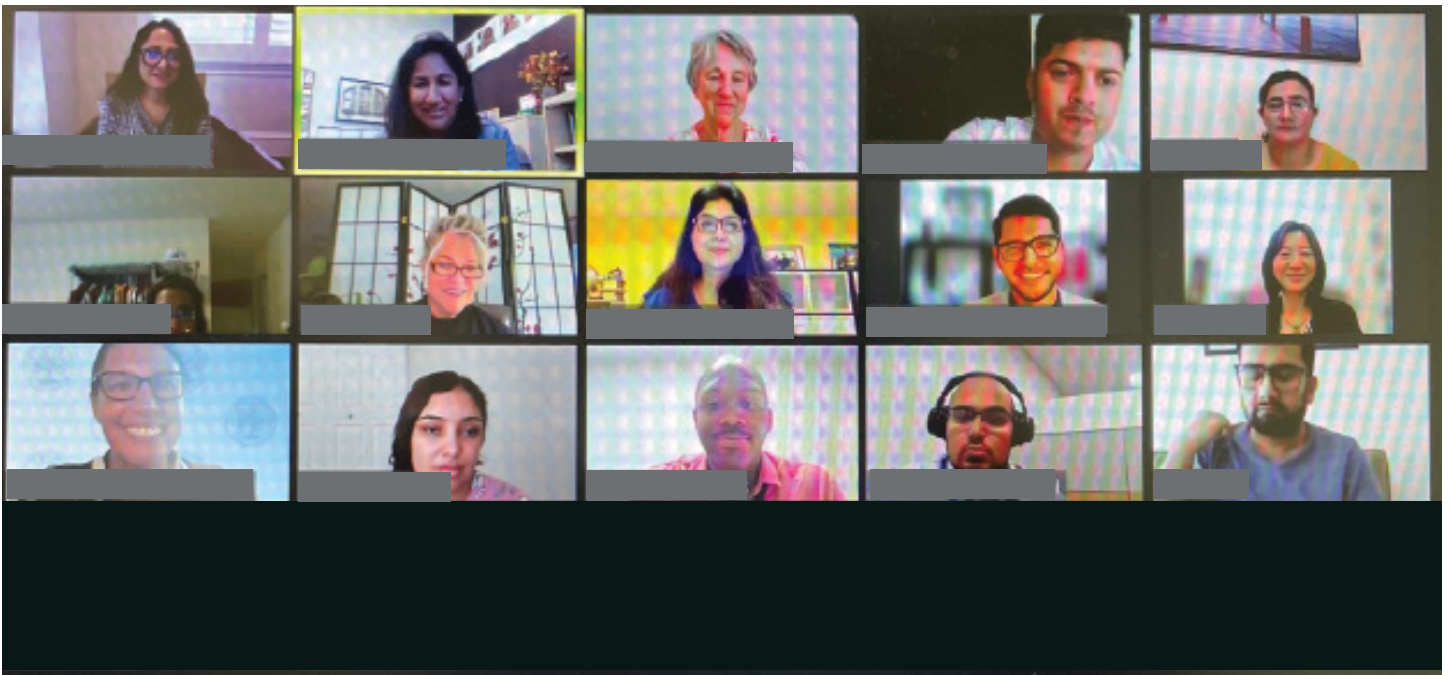
I recommend Eddy for Student Recognition. He is very determined and a hard-working student who always comes to class with a smile. He always participates eagerly and helps other students whenever they need help with their work. In addition, he gets along with everyone in class and we are so lucky to have him in our class.

Student: Malika Faizi
Teacher: Lori Farnsworth

I would like to recognize Malika Faizi for being an exceptional student in our Level 2 English class this spring semester at William Ramsay. Malika was usually the first student to arrive. She only missed one class—so her attendance record was nearly perfect. She consistently completed assigned homework and welcomed suggestions for improvement. It was clear from the careful attention she gave to her work and from her warm, beautiful smile that Malika enjoyed her time in the classroom and loved to learn. Malika, it is students like you who inspire both teachers and students. Thank you for leading our class with your example.



EEC's Board President, Michael Rees Gavin, speaks at our rebrand event in November 2022.



Visit by US Department of Education's Assistant Secretary, Amy Loyd, to EEC's Intensive Destination Workforce® class.

Student: Maria Eugenia Font de Siero
Teacher: Lori Farnsworth

I would like to recognize Maria Eugenia Font de Siero as a standout student in our Level 2 English class this spring semester at William Ramsay. From the beginning, it was clear to me that Maria was committed to learning English. She was a focused and determined learner who was not afraid to speak up and ask questions.

Maria caught a very bad cold at the beginning of the semester and missed nearly two weeks of class, but she returned and made up for lost instruction. At other times during the semester, when her work schedule conflicted with class, she contacted me to get the homework and used technology to send her work when she couldn't be in class. When she could attend class, she often arrived early with her homework completed. She enjoyed working with other class members, and it always seemed like she had made a new friend. Thank you for your hard work and positive contribution to our class, Maria.

Student: Anita Ghafoori
Teachers: Karen Schroth and Kathleen McCleary

Anita is a consistent, dependable presence in our class. She is always willing to participate in group exercises and discussions. She is prepared to learn and attentive to the tasks at hand. She partners well with other students and asks questions. Her face is always on-camera during our Zoom class, which is important to us as teachers. We like to connect with our students and Anita is willing to be a face that reminds us of the determined nature of our online students. She models the dedication and strength needed to apply newfound English skills to a strong professional background and career that was built in her native country. Anita aspires to take additional EEC classes and we hope to see her again next semester.

Student: Marzia Haqparast
Teacher: Cassandra Kramer

Marzia is a very hardworking student. She has been taking virtual FLP classes for the past year. Even while caring for her young children and being in doctor's appointments, she still attends class. She works very hard to reach her goals. She has been studying and is going to take the citizenship test on 5/19. Go, Marzia!

Student: Nadia Jeridi
Teachers: Karen Schroth and Kathleen McCleary

Nadia is very dedicated to improving her English. She listens closely in class, takes notes, and asks good questions. She is always willing to participate, either by reading aloud or contributing her thoughts and ideas during a discussion. She attends every online class session and also came to the in-person Career and Opportunities Fair. Her teachers appreciate the seriousness of her commitment to building a new career pathway using her English skills. We also appreciate her warm smile and friendly personality which she uses to help everybody feel comfortable during class.

Student: Elaine (Gao Jing)
Teachers: Janet Pauling and Elizabeth Nelson

I am recommending her because she was perseverant, focused, dedicated, and curious - which contributed to her progress.

Student: Eyoung Jung
Teacher: Valerie Sutter

Eyoung rarely misses class and works hard to advance her English skills. She is impressively motivated to continue learning more and more. A team player, she works well with others in the class and is always attentive.

Student: Viachaslau Kharashautsau
Teacher: Janice Lloyd

I told the students at the beginning of the session that I wanted them to engage each other in small group discussions, encouraging each other to ask and answer questions in English. Viachaslau's efforts were consistently strong. He would add to the conversations and encourage others. He considered their viewpoints and respected other peoples' views. I appreciated his willingness to talk and to listen, especially during an assignment named, "You're the Boss, Who Would You Hire?"

Student: Dana Lee
Teacher: Jan Auerbach

Dana had almost perfect attendance all semester. She always signed in to the zoom class on time. She did all homework that was assigned. She had reviewed in-class assignments ahead of time; her answers were almost always correct. She has a great sense of humor and added a lot of levity to the class. She was conscientious about improving her pronunciation. It was a pleasure to teach her.

Student: Suk Lee
Teacher: Jackie Park

It is my pleasure to recommend Suk for student recognition. She is a dedicated student who always joins class early with a smile. She is always ready to learn, is focused, and participates in class. She is also a very hard-working student and completes her homework. It has been a pleasure to have her in class.



EEC Beginning English class

Student: Pablo Luyo
Teacher: Janice Lloyd

He routinely met my expectations to speak English in small group settings and made his co-students feel comfortable practicing English. He served often as a facilitator, taking a lead role in the groups. When we'd break out of groups and get back together as a class, he'd often ask good questions about words or phrases that lead to conversations the whole class seemed to enjoy. For example, he said he'd never heard the word "rather" before. That led to a fun discussion where students picked slips from an envelope and had to say why they'd rather do one thing over another.

Student: Tamana Mahboob
Teacher: Conor Dinan

...because of her hard work, constructive participation, and determination to make rapid progress in class.

Student: Rosibel Gomez Martinez
Teacher: Kobi Carter

Rosibel enthusiastically participated in class, while her very young daughter insisted on being by her side in every class. Rosibel also assisted other learners to improve their learning.

Student: Gloria Mendez
Teacher: Bill Meara

Gloria is a great student who has taken to heart my strong suggestion that students seek out opportunities to speak English outside the classroom. She talks to her daughter's school bus driver, the people in the pharmacy, elderly people in her neighborhood, flight attendants, her daughter's teachers and many others. Her English has improved significantly. She is an excellent student.

Student: Miragul
Teacher: Matthew Halse

Miragul always comes to class, works hard, helps his classmates and is very friendly and eager to learn.

Student: Shamshad Nizami
Teacher: Rawa Zaid

I'm recommending her for being positive, helpful, cooperative and friendly. She always comes to class with a beautiful smile. She helps lower level students when they struggle with something in class. And she does her homework regularly.

Student: Janet Olachea
Teacher: Conor Dinan

...because of her regular attendance, clear focus, and classroom diligence that allowed her to make enormous strides.

Student: Atefa Rahimi
Teacher: Rawa Zaid

She enthusiastically participates in class and turns in her homework on time. She never hesitates to ask questions, and most of the time they are crucial ones for which the answers are beneficial for other students as well.

Student: Griselda Jeanette Rivera
Teacher: Bill Meara

Jeanette has made tremendous progress. She is very dedicated to English learning. When she is late in arriving home from work, she will Zoom in from her car. She perseveres through class even when she is visibly tired. She is a wonderful student.

Student: Wendy Rivera
Teacher: Cassandra Kramer

Wendy has worked extremely hard in the fall and spring FLP class. She pushes herself to try new sentences in English and use new vocabulary words in everyday English conversation. She is very motivated and tries her best. Great job, Wendy!

Student: Carol Rodriguez
Teacher: Brian Brooks

She had 100% attendance and 100% homework completion. She completed all writing assignments, always arrived for class early, and participated fully.

Student: Abdul Waris Safi
Teacher: Valerie Sutter

When Waris first came to our class, soon after arriving from Afghanistan, he was unsure he would succeed. Yet despite a busy work schedule, he attended class regularly and worked diligently to improve his English speaking and writing skills. By the end of the term he was speaking with everyone in class and writing stories each week in his writing journal. Amazingly persistent, he is a model for other students.



Beginning English Level 3 class singing along to songs they learned in English.

Student: Ana Sejas
Teacher: Valerie Sutter

Ana has a busy schedule but still comes to class regularly and is enthusiastic when learning English. She often shares her experiences about living in the USA as well as her Peruvian culture and customs. She never hesitates to ask important questions and she works well with other students as part of a team.

Student: Uranus Siddigi
Teacher: Jackie Park

I recommend Uranus for Student Recognition. She is such a pleasure to have in class. She gets along with everybody, participates enthusiastically, asks good questions, and does her homework regularly. She always comes to class with a positive attitude.

Student: Milagro Torres
Teacher: James Falcone

Milagro has had 100% attendance, and is trying really hard to improve her English, even with her busy life working full time and with children. She has been a joy to have in the class.

Student: Victor Tovar
Teacher: Conor Dinan

...because of his enthusiasm for the class, regular attendance, and eagerness to push himself as far as possible.

Student: Mariela Turcios Umanzor
Teacher: Matthew Halse

She is a hardworking, patient, and pleasant student who always works hard and never misses a class.

Student: Camila Valdez
Teachers: Karen Leckie and Nan Fife

Camila Valdez deserves recognition. Camila is intelligent and thoughtful. She has many goals for her future, including a college degree, a business in interior design, and American citizenship. Camila believes learning English is the key to accomplishing these goals. She plans her future carefully and hopes to start community college in two years.

Camila is a leader. Because of her intelligence, communication ability, and hard work, she has become a manager at her workplace. She attends night classes even though her job in the construction field is physically demanding. Her patience and willingness to work with others make her an excellent student. Camila is self-motivated in English class, working ahead in the book, asking for additional assignments, and posing practical questions.

Camila has faced many obstacles since coming to America but remains dedicated to continuing her education. She will accomplish her goals.

Student: Cayo Virreira

Teacher: Kelly Gueli

Cayo's commitment to learning English is commendable. He has consistently attended classes and is an attentive student. Cayo has expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to learn English and is an active participant in class. His progress in learning English has been excellent; with each class I can see an improvement in his speaking, listening and reading. He has been a delight to work with!

Student: Marthun Wondayu

Teacher: Janice Lloyd

Marthun sought me out several times to ask how she could improve her English. Again, she was one of the students in the class who routinely followed my advice to speak English in small group settings. I saw her confidence soar during the spring session as she strengthened her ability to express ideas by taking a leading role in small groups.

Student: Xiaochen Yang

Teacher: Ann Niederpruem Anderson

Xiaochen has really found his voice as the spring semester has progressed. His English speaking skills have improved dramatically as he has gained confidence and has made friends in the class. He has PERFECT class attendance and he comes early to class, eager to listen, speak, and write. Xiaochen has completed all homework assignments and he asks good questions about the assignments. Xiaochen participates actively in class and enjoys exchanges with his classmates. I have been thankful to have Xiaochen in our class. He is a great student!

Student: Manuel Zavala

Teacher: Kobi Carter

Manuel went above and beyond as a student in our class. He not only enthusiastically participated in all class activities, but he also helped other learners understand or improve their language skills by giving them tips and tricks.



EEC student and class aide at their end of session celebration.

Teachers Maura Sleeve and Robin Lundgren would like to recognize all of the students in their Virtual Level 2 class this spring:

Johana Arias

We've had the pleasure of working with Johana since last spring. Johana is very committed to learning English and attends every class almost without fail. What great improvement she has shown – she has also become a strong support for other students! Her positive attitude and outlook are apparent in everything she does. Even when things are less than ideal, Johana shows dedication, positivity, and hope.

Shirin Asadollahi

Shirin attends class regularly and always has a smile on her face! It's been such a pleasure getting to know her. Though she hasn't been in the United States for very long, she has shown amazing progress in speaking and writing in English. She asks great questions and loves to learn things about the people and the culture as well as the language.

Lily Benitez

Lily works hard every week in class, building on what she already knows. It's truly a delight to watch her build on her expanding vocabulary, and as the weeks have gone by, we have learned that she knows a lot of words for things in English. She is getting more opportunities in her work since she can converse with the customers. She hopes to have her own company one day soon!

Angela Castro

Angela fully engages herself in every session and shows great motivation and persistence to improve her English skills. She always has something fun and worthwhile to add to discussions - whether the discussion be about prepositions or a favorite hobby - and it is great to see her become more confident about speaking. Her writing also reflects her many interests and abilities.

Desiree Djayard

Desiree does her best to attend every class, even if that means listening in from the park with her son. Being a busy, young mother has not gotten in the way of her dedication to learn English, and the progress she has made is evidence of this. She makes us laugh when she relates stories from her work at the airport. Her compassion for those in the world who need help stands out in class discussions.

Zenith Maria Gutierrez Fontalvo

Zenith speaks with a great deal of passion about everything that is important to her. She attends class regularly and is always an eager, active participant. She has shared with us her interest in all the arts, particularly dance, and her enthusiasm is infectious! Her commitment to what she loves leaves no doubt that she will achieve whatever she sets her mind to.

Tharia Hamed

Tharia is a hard-working, positive learner with an attitude of "I can do it." She works especially hard on her speaking skills. We love it when she shares some of her life experiences with us during class. She has a fun laugh that makes us smile whenever we hear it! It is terrific to see her English skills continue to improve!

Yalda Mahmoodi

Yalda is a most capable, attentive learner who displays both purpose and consistent growth in her English studies. Her focus is on improving her English communication skills to build better relationships with her neighbors and friends, as well as with clients at her job. She often is the first in class to offer an answer or comment, even when the task is new or different. It is great to see her confidence growing!

Ana Orellana

Ana is a busy young mother who manages to balance childcare and learning English - and keep a smile on her face! With encouragement, she continues to grow in confidence in both her spoken and written English. She always keeps trying! She reports that she is also able to understand things better when they are spoken to her.

Marwa Sabery

Marwa has consistently shown growth in all aspects of learning English. She speaks, reads, and writes well, and is always comfortable asking questions. We love it when she sometimes corrects the teacher - always eager to share what she knows! She is a dedicated learner and has made great strides in English class. We are proud that she aspires to go to college in the near future and study information technology.

Christy Salgado

It is hard to imagine a more engaged or enjoyable student than Christy! She is often the first to smile or laugh when amusing things happen in class - and it quickly spreads to other students. Her skills in reading, writing, and speaking English continue to improve, and she seems much more comfortable in conversation. She is always ready to help out her classmates.



EEC volunteer ready to share information and distribute childrens books.

Fahima Satar

Fahima is one of the most dedicated, hard-working students we have ever had. Her progress in English has been incredible because of all the effort she puts into each and every assignment. She excels especially with grammar and vocabulary and continues to improve with her conversation. She shows genuine compassion and respect for those around her – always ready to help!

Santiago Serna

Santiago is a most impressive student and fun person to know. During the semester, Santiago had to return to his native Columbia for an extended period of time. However, that didn't stop him from showing up at almost every online class! A quick study, Santiago has shown tremendous dedication and commitment to improving his English so he can live and work in the US.

Khyber Shinwari

Khyber is a generous, warm-hearted student who continues to overcome language challenges with his hard work and positive spirit. His conversation skills are steadily getting stronger, and the class enjoys hearing about his work with mentally disabled students. Even when a question is a difficult, he is always willing to try and answer it.

James Zhao

With hard work and effort, James meets the extra challenges of being the only Chinese student in the class. We love to hear what he can share about his many experiences. At his job, he applies himself by talking a lot to the older population he serves and to his boss. His conversational skills and his pronunciation are steadily getting better.

Teachers Stacey Becker, Ida Draim, and Ann Niederpruem Anderson would like to recognize all of the students in their Virtual Level 3 class this spring:

Maryam Foushanji

Maryam has played a very important role among the students in our Fall and Spring Semesters. She has been the one to ask the really important questions and to give voice to the sentiments that others feel but cannot express. Maryam has shown the other students the true value of English fluency by eloquently telling them about her family, particularly her grandchildren. She wrote a very touching piece about the heartbreak felt by her and others who have had to leave their war-torn country and we were all emotional when she read it to the class. Maryam has been unfailingly courteous and helpful, as well as appreciating every new lesson that she learns. We are very thankful for having had Maryam in our class.

Vasantha Komakula

Throughout the Spring Semester, Vasantha has shown a strong commitment to improving her English fluency. She has participated in class exercises and discussions with enthusiasm and openness. Vasantha has completed virtually every homework assignment and her submissions have been of a very high quality. Her written pieces have been beautiful - both technically and substantively. When Vasantha writes, she is genuine and speaks from her heart and it is wonderful to read. Vasantha has been a pleasure to teach.

Zinet Legesse

As our Spring Semester has progressed, Zinet has worked really hard on her speaking and writing skills and has emerged as an excellent student. She has been ready, often with the correct answer, when called upon in class and willing to provide insight into her life and views during our class discussions. She has completed virtually all of the homework assignments to a very high level of excellence, particularly her writing and research assignments. In Zinet, we have a student whose strong faith gives rise to respectfulness, dedication and kindness. These personal qualities, as well as her English skills, have made us very thankful to have had Zinet in our class!

Sara Mahgoub

Sarah's strong commitment to her English studies is evident from the fact that she has participated in our Fall and Spring classes from Egypt - halfway around the world. After working a full day, she has always greeted us with a warm smile and joyful eyes. Sarah has made impressive progress in her English speaking and writing. She has eagerly participated in class exercises and discussions and has been very eloquent in providing information about her life. We have really appreciated Sarah's intense focus in class. She has asked intelligent questions and provided helpful feedback on the lessons. It has been a pleasure to have Sarah in our Fall and Spring classes!

Elaha Qadeer Ranjbar

From her first Spring class onward, Elaha has greatly impressed us with her enthusiasm for learning English and her speaking and writing skills. She has frequently volunteered during our discussions and exercises. Her answers have always been well considered and very helpful for the other students. She has been very eloquent when sharing details of her everyday life or her views about current issues. Elaha completed almost all of the homework assignments and most of her answers were correct. Her written pieces were excellent - both with respect to the vocabulary that she chose and her manner of expressing herself. Having Elaha in our class has been wonderful for both the students and the teachers!

The Patricia M. Donnelly Merit Scholarship



Named in honor of the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia's (now English Empowerment Center) retired Executive Director who led the organization from 2002 to 2017, the Patricia M. Donnelly Merit Scholarship is awarded to an outstanding beginning-level English Empowerment Center learner whose dedication to literacy inspires the EEC community.

This scholarship, which covers tuition for up to six semesters of classes, is given to students who exemplify commitment, perseverance, achievement, and classroom leadership.

Eunice first came to the United States in 2006 to visit her son and see the seasons change, before returning in 2018 and receiving U.S. residency. Her journey of learning English began when she was in school in Colombia. When her teacher stated that they would begin to learn a second language, Eunice asked why they were learning English; her teacher said it was to prepare for when she would go to the United States, something Eunice believed would never happen for her. Throughout her time in school, Eunice picked up small phrases in English although her dedication to learn the language did not start until she moved here. Eunice loves to meet new people and wishes to speak with everyone she encounters; this is what sparked her dedication to learn English. She found the English Empowerment Center and quickly signed up for a level 1 Beginning English class.

Since beginning her journey of learning English, Eunice shared how exciting it is to be able to communicate better with English speakers. She is always excited to share anything she knows or has learned in order to help others. People sometimes ask, "How can you help others learn when you don't speak fluent English yet yourself?" and she says that every little bit she learns, she will share with others. Greatly inspired by the kindness and helpful nature of her instructors as well as her own desire to help others, Eunice wants to one day help teach others beginning their journey to learn English and provide a service to those in need. Eunice's kind and generous nature has led her to be nicknamed "happy Eunice" and it is such a privilege to witness her encouraging her classmates, making new friends, and making the classroom an exciting place to be.

Eunice would like to share, "To conclude by first thanking God, my son Oscar David, my family, my teachers Jackie and other teachers, friends, classmates, Maria Leiva, Terry, Debbie, Fairfax County bus drivers that transport me, and all the people with whom I interact on a daily basis. Thank you very much for the recognition, I appreciate it with love and share it with everyone."

Eunice Carvajal 2023 Recipient



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The mission of the English Empowerment Center is to teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community.



English Empowerment Center

Learn English. Change your life.



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"While learning English, I also feel a sense of belonging that I am a member of this society. The opportunity to listen to English through the English Empowerment Center and to read, write and speak English gives me confidence."

-Bangjin, English Empowerment Center Learner