



The RALC Reader

The Richardson Adult Literacy Center Newsletter—Spring 2009

Wednesday Morning's Conversation Class

On Wednesday mornings at the Richardson Adult Literacy Center (RALC), you will find three to six women gathered around a table, chatting excitedly in English about their daily tasks. They are working on speaking, as well as on reading and practicing some grammar exercises that have been planned to match their individual needs. Overall, they want to improve their conversational skills in their second, sometimes third language. Japan, Costa Rica, Pakistan, Mexico and Vietnam are their home countries.

The women come from all walks of life. They are homemakers, exchange students, cosmetologists and even former teachers. They all enrich the learning environment by sharing experiences fueled by their diverse backgrounds. Their goals are similar, though. They come to the RALC because they want to get better jobs, volunteer in the community, communicate with their children's teachers at school, or just feel more comfortable picking up the phone and calling a doctor's office, a hairdresser or a contractor to get their carpets cleaned. They all know that improving their English can be a means to a better quality of life. Kumi says, "I have to have a confidence to my English and try to call by myself."

Attending a conversation class at RALC often is a first timid movement towards more structured academic or professional instruction. Providing them with all the information necessary, referring them, and even "losing" them to another organization is a part of RALC's work.

"It is always delightful to see the students grow and watch how they acquire more knowledge—step by step," says Barbara Berthold, the Wednesday morning volunteer tutor. The students themselves see it likewise. Asked how they jump their hurdles, Shima put it somewhat like "going out there, trying, sometimes failing, trying again, succeeding, and next time going a step farther."

From the President's Pen

In January, we were delighted to welcome four new members to the RALC Board of Directors. I believe they will add valuable talents to the Board. The new members are Roman Cooper, Frost National Bank; Dionne Davis, Catholic Charities of Dallas; Monica Heid, City of Richardson; and Pamela Tomasello, Collin County Business Press. We have already put them to work as we finished our review of the Strategic Plan.

I had an experience in January that I need to share with you. I attended training for new volunteer tutors. The training, attended by nine other prospective RALC volunteers, was conducted by Board members Barbara Berthold, Liz Harling and Mary Beth Hoesterey. I may never have a one-on-one student to whom I will teach English, but I learned a lot about how we train tutors and the value of our training. As a result of the training session and my statement on the training application form that I am computer literate, I have been matched with a woman who wanted to learn to use a computer. Another RALC tutor is teaching her English.

I encourage you to get involved!

Jean Stuart

Tutor Training

April 18
10:15 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

and/or

Online and DVD

Call the office

972-644-5119

Thank you to our 2008 RALC Donors

Thank you for your gifts. If corrections or additions need to be made to this list, please contact the RALC office at 972-644-5119.

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Published by the Richardson Adult Literacy Center

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