ESL In-Home Program of Northern Nevada

NEWSLETTER

One-on-one Tutoring in ESL, GED, Computer Literacy, Conversation Practice, and Citizenship Study… AT NO COST

We serve 5 counties in Northern Nevada: Carson, Washoe, Douglas, Lyon and Churchill

Volume 12, Issue 3
April 2019

INSIDE A CLASSROOM AT A NORTHERN NEVADA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WOMEN ARE PRACTICING SPELLING OUT LOUD IN ENGLISH

They’re the mothers, aunts and grandparents of children at the school. Two mornings each week, the women immigrants from Central America, Mexico, the Middle East, Asia and the Caribbean — drop off their children and then head into a classroom of their own to learn English. Some attend a class when they pick up their children.

• Teaching parents English and helping them engage in their students’ education, which in turn helps the children do better in school. Parents get more involved in their children’s classrooms and are able to help more with homework. “I’ve come to realize that having adult education classes offered in the community, and particularly at a child’s school, makes adult education accessible to some parents who would not normally feel comfortable leaving their community,” says Sue P, who directed the school district’s program. “They may not go to an adult school campus to, let’s say, study ESL [English as a Second Language] or for a GED [a high school equivalency degree]. We are a first step.”

• Wahbia A., a mother from Yemen, has been in the US for 15 years. She has six children, one of them a fourth grader. She used to struggle to understand English in her daily life, she says, but the class helped her expand her vocabulary. “When I go to the store, when I go to the hospital, I understand a lot,” Wahbia says. She says the class helps her understand her own children. “When they talk to each other, I understand what they say. Before, no understand what they say,” she says. Wahbia says the math unit allowed her to help her fourth-grade daughter with homework questions. “One time last week my daughter had one with fractions,” she said. “I said, ‘Yes, yes, I understand this one. I can help you.’”

• The women in the literacy class have varying levels of English and experience in formal schooling. Some never learned to read or write in their native language. Others, such as those who only speak Arabic, are learning the Roman alphabet for the first time. Meanwhile, Spanish speakers are learning the differences in pronouncing vowels and consonants. “We just start at the very beginning: alphabetic concepts, phonics,” says ESL Tutor Kathy L. “That’s where my training as a first-grade teacher really helps, because I’m able to have lots of tools to help them.”

• Mary S., an adult student from Mexico, says the diversity of her classmates has helped her improve her English conversation. “Maybe it’s good [there are students from] different countries, because practicing more English with Arabic, or Vietnamese, different languages Mary says about practicing English with speakers of other languages.

A 2018 study in Social Science Research journal shows some teachers perceive immigrant, non-white parents as less involved, which can affect how their children do in school. Teachers are more likely to give students lower grades and less likely to recommend them for honors classes. Parents from the literacy class have gone on to take higher levels of English at a local community college. Independent evaluations of literacy programs have shown that parents who participate in them get better jobs as a result of the program, and their children attend more days of school and do better academically.

These programs are not only for English-language learners: Classes in some districts help English-speaking parents improve their reading and writing skills, as well as help them take the GED. “In some of our studies, we’re showing that kids whose parents attend literacy classes attend school 16 more days a year. That’s a whole year by the time they graduate high school,” says Sharon D., president of the National Center for Families Learning, which provides grants to districts to start such programs and requested and published the evaluation. “We’re also showing that our achievement test scores rise with the children who have been with parents in family literacy. So we’re excited about what we see both for parents and for children.”

Still, the program isn’t without obstacles. The morning schedule isn’t feasible for parents who work full-time, and funding adult education is a struggle. Before 2008, Nevada dedicated funding to adult education. But during the recession and state budget cuts, school districts were given more flexibility to use the funding for other educational purposes, and that translated into drastic cuts for adult education programs in many districts. But the amount is still less than what it was prior to the recession.

The ESL In-Home Program of Northern Nevada offers the literacy program in many schools. In those schools, we are told that the program is making a difference for their students. We have also eliminated the obstacle of morning classes by holding classes after school, or the parent who has 2-3 jobs utilizes an individual tutor for learning at the Parents’ availability.
We have told you what the ESL In-Home Program is. Now we want to share how programs and individuals throughout the United States and the World are finding success using it.

One of our programs is the Online SKYPE Program which is an easy-to-use online literacy course that we designed to teach adults in English Conversation who live outside of the USA. Anyone who lives in other countries can practice their English knowledge of grammar, sentence structure, verbs, tenses, etc.

We currently teach online in the following countries:

- France
- Peru
- Colombia
- Mexico

Many of our online learners are families of our current learners in Nevada. However, we have tutors also teaching English as a Second Language in other U.S. states: Nebraska, California, Connecticut, Arizona.

Our Director received another award on April 10 - a Medal of Valor which states:

“Whoever saves a life is as if they have saved the entire world.” (She accepted it for our current and former ESL tutors)

Yale School of Management

Interviewed our Director on April 18, 2019

To: ESL In Home Program of Northern Nevada-NEW

Yale School of Management has reached out to Founder and Executive Director, Florence Phillips regarding her work with ESL In-Home Program of Northern Nevada to participate in their research study, now 40 years old, on the study of heroic leadership as part of the CNN Hero series.

Jeffrey A. Sonnenfeld, Senior Associate Dean for Leadership Studies wrote: “Florence’s model can inspire so many others in society to follow your path. As part of our growth initiative to start training other’s who want to develop their own programs within their communities, this will be a part of laying the next foundation of Heroic Leaders.”
Volunteers are the heart and soul of Northern Nevada. We wouldn’t be able to provide our services without their dedication and enthusiasm. You don’t have to be a teacher or have a background in literacy to be a tutor; our staff will provide you with all of the training and support that you’ll need. Please consider volunteering in one of the following ways (training takes one hour at your convenience):

1-1 Tutors – You will work one-on-one with an adult who is struggling to speak, read, and write English, helping them to identify and reach real life goals such as obtaining a GED, applying for a job, or reading with their child. 1-1 tutors meet one hour sessions twice weekly with their learner and we ask that you make a minimum of a 3-month commitment. All materials are provided at 0 cost.

English Conversation – You will provide support to adults by having practice classes in English conversation. Most of our foreign students lack the self-confidence to speak English in public places and need the practice to give them the self-esteem they need. This opportunity has a more flexible time commitment.

GED Preparation The class is goal-oriented for those determined to find a job. Volunteers in this class help mainly with math.

Parents with ESL school children - The learners are adults with school children also learning English. This class focuses on goal-oriented learning as well as a family literacy component. Volunteers in this class help the parent to speak in English with their children’s teachers and medical personnel without interpreters.

U.S. Citizenship Class – You will be trained in how to help legal immigrants obtain citizenship.

**Event/Workshop Volunteer** – Assist our staff with fun events to recruit tutors for our wait-list of adults who are eager to learn English language skills.

To serve as an ESL volunteer we ask that you meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have good verbal communication skills
- Agree to a criminal background check
- Attend a one-hour’s Volunteer Orientation & Training at a date/time/location of our preference
- Have cultural sensitivity to people of diverse backgrounds

**Orientation & Training Calendar** Training dates: Any day/time/location you prefer according to your schedule.

Before taking this training you must go through an hour-long orientation. This training is for anyone interested in volunteering to make a difference in someone’s life by helping with basic English. During this training you will learn about all of our different programs, how to teach English as a second language, how to tutor adults, as well as different strategies, tips, and tricks. Please RSVP and/or sign up for an orientation by contacting us at 775-888-2021. Space is limited.

Volunteers like current Lyon County Tutor, Judy, really gets to know the learners and are witnesses as the learning and transitions unfold. Here is a Q&A with her:

Q: What inspired you to volunteer with an adult literacy program?
A: I took literacy for granted. When I found out how many adults struggle with functional literacy, I was both humbled and motivated to make a change.

Q: What is your favorite part about volunteering?
A: My favorite part about volunteering is being able to see the progress in my learner and knowing that his progress in literacy translates into confidence and well-being in so many other aspects of his life.

Q: Is there anything you have learned from the students and would like to share?
A: Yes. I’ve learned that volunteering one-to-two hours a week can make a vast difference in someone else’s life and in my own. I’ve also learned that it’s never too late to try learning something new.

Q: If you could send a message to all adult learners, what would it be?
A: Asking for help in learning to read, or improving the literacy skills that you already have, is such a brave thing to do. Working and trying to better yourself through education, despite the obstacles and frustrations, is such an admirable goal. I hope you’re proud of the effort and progress that you’re making. It’s not an easy thing to do.

Q: If you could share your experiences as a volunteer with other volunteers, what would you tell them?
A: Tutoring an adult learner has taught me a lot about communication. If someone isn't understanding you, don’t just repeat the same question or sentence. Rephrase your ideas. Communication is so much about how our minds see and hear things. Challenge yourself to see and hear things in ways you don’t normally see and hear them. It will help you teach a greater diversity of learners, and you might learn something about yourself and your ways of thinking and learning in the process.

Q: Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience as an adult literacy volunteer?
A: I’m just really glad to be helping another person learn. Learning is one of my favorite things to do, and I'm so glad I can help someone else experience the magic of unlocking knowledge too.
Mission Statement: ESL In-Home Program of Northern Nevada, a nonprofit volunteer educational organization, provides free adult educational programs that empower people, especially those of low-to-moderate income, to become more productive members of their local communities by providing them with the language and cultural skills necessary for life in America.

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list please Email us at:
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Type “Remove”, and your name and city in the Subject box.

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to the ESL In-Home Program of Northern Nevada to help purchase books and train new tutors for non-English speaking adults on our wait-list who are eager to learn English language skills.

We are an IRS tax-exempt 501©(3) nonprofit organization. To donate: www.eslinhome.org/donations. WE NEED YOUR HELP.....EVEN $5.00 FOR OUR ESL CITIZENSHIP FUND BANK ACCOUNT

TO HELP A STUDENT WITH THE CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION FEES (USCIS COST: $725)
Don’t forget that giving means more than money; you can also give time.