



# LETC Extra!

*"Improving the Lives of Immigrants Through Education"*

October 2004

## DC Learns awards LETC teacher and Board member the Literacy Volunteer of the Year Award

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Board Chair Gerald Langan was named the literacy volunteer of the year by DC Learns in May. Nominees are selected from non-profit organizations throughout the Washington area. Honored at the group's annual volunteer recognition event, Jerry is a triple-threat volunteer, having been a founding board member of LETC; working as a devoted teaching volunteer every trimester for the past six years; and now as the chair of our Board of Directors.



**LETC Board Chair Jerry Langan and new Board member Kathleen Hendrix**

He also has shaped the organization by serving as interim executive director -- while continuing his fulltime work as an attorney for the Treasury Department -- and by helping LETC secure our non-profit status. You can learn more about Jerry on LETC's new monthly "Volunteer Spotlight" bulletin board, described on page 3 of this issue. Thank you, Jerry!

### Special points of interest:

- \* Over 200 volunteer teachers and tutors this term
- \* Over 100 more students enrolled than last Fall
- \* Read inspiring student and volunteer stories on our web site, [www.languageetc.org](http://www.languageetc.org)
- \* New daytime classes
- \* Free childcare for all students through a partnership with Kids' Corner

## LETC Launches New Daytime Classes and Free Childcare Through a Partnership with Kid's Corner

With the help of a grant from the DC Youth and Children Investment Trust, this Fall Language ETC was able to expand its schedule to offer daytime classes and offer free childcare to all its students through a partnership with Kid's Corner Daycare Center, a bi-lingual daycare center located in the same facilities. Daytime classes, now being held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, currently serve almost 40 Basic and Level 1A

students. With each semester LETC will add another level, increasing the number of students we are able to serve by 20 to 30 each term. In addition to the partnership with Kid's Corner, LETC has entered into a partnership with the Latino Economic Development Corporation (LEDC). LEDC will present information about its home purchasing and small



business start-up seminars to LETC students each trimester. The partnerships allows us to bring even more services to our students.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every fall we are excited to start the new school year. This year the launch of new daytime classes and the beginning of our partnership with Kid's Corner has made it even more exciting. We are off to a great start this trimester, with an increase of 100 students over last fall and a waiting list of 70 more students. And we have an unprecedented number of volunteers willing to teach or tutor: 150 teachers, 61 tutors, and another waiting list for volunteers! Their generosity means we can offer quality teaching and one-on-one tutoring to more students than ever before. Thanks to Our Lady Queen of the Americas Church that is renovating

and will leave us with additional classrooms, we hope to be able to accommodate even more students and volunteer teachers in the near future.

This fall we welcome new Board member, Kathleen Hendrix and are thankful to count the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation as a new supporter, funding our daytime and childcare program.

LETC was out and about in the community this summer. It is really exciting to get out and talk to people about the great work we are doing, and very gratifying to hear back from so many people that they know us well and appreciate



our efforts. Our student and volunteer stories on the website capture some of the unique LETC energy, I welcome you to visit us so that you may experience it in person.

## FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Starting in September of this year, Language ETC asked our volunteers to attend professional development trainings in addition to our pre-semester trainings. Volunteers at Language ETC have responded enthusiastically and have shown support for this new venture. Our volunteers appreciate the additional support and help we are providing through our professional development offerings.

Why is professional development so important? Trainings improve teachers' skills and help cultivate a better understanding of appropriate techniques to use in the classroom. Trainings help develop and enhance the quality of teaching and learning offered to our ESL students. Professional development also enables the volunteer teachers to examine their teaching in relation to students' learning and make adjustments to benefit the students' learning. Raising the professionalism of our program at Language ETC benefits everyone – teachers, students, and the community.

Four trainings will be offered this fall semester and more are planned for 2005. A catalog of Volunteer Development Training will be published and available for the 2005 school year.

Trainings offered this fall are:

- ❖ Role Play provides students the opportunity to deal with the un-



predictable nature of language. The technique develops students' skills in choosing verbal and nonverbal language appropriate to the time, place, person with whom they are communicating.

- ❖ Error Correction encourages you to see mistakes as an important part of the learning process in your ESL classroom. Advice and tips on when to correct, when not to correct, and how best to correct in both written and oral work will be discussed.
- ❖ Information Gap exists when students do not have the same information. They must communicate with each other in order to close the gap in their information using a variety of activities. The

technique emphasizes the importance of real communication in the learning process.

- ❖ In Group/Pair Work, we will present, discuss, and practice appropriate methods of pair/group work in the ESL classroom. How do we facilitate group/pair work? What kinds of activities are appropriate for group/pair work? What are the hurdles to overcome in the classroom using this method? How can I make it work most effectively in my classroom?

We look forward to providing even more educational and training opportunities for our volunteers in the future.



## VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR COMMENTS

We have had a great start to our fall term of classes at Language, ETC. We are lucky to have so many returning volunteers teaching with us again this term and also many new faces joining us as teachers and tutors.

From Fall 2003 to Fall 2004, we have increased the number of volunteers from 120 to over 200! The tutoring program has grown from just a few students and tutors participating to more than 50 tutors and students working together one day a week for an hour. We also started a weekly conversation group in the spring which is continuing to meet every Wednesday this fall. The conversation group meets for one hour before class and discusses news articles and different topic areas, including health, current events, and sports. The group is open to students in intermediate and advanced levels to give students addi-



tional conversation practice with a native-English speaker and other students.

Over the summer two volunteers, Mira Inbar and Veronica Grigera, held a book club with Language ETC students. They read George Orwell's *1984* and met weekly to discuss various aspects of the book and finished the summer by watching the movie version of the story.

In addition to getting things ready for the fall term, we have also been busy attending several events in the community. In August, Language, ETC participated in the D.C. government's Office on Latino Affairs' (OLA) Latino Family Fair. Many agencies and organizations were involved in the event that drew more than 800 Latinos. In September, we participated in Adams Morgan Day where we saw many of our current and past volunteers and students enjoying the beautiful day and festival activities. In October, we participated in the Walk for Literacy 2004 and the DC Reads Festival, supporting the important issue of literacy in the DC area. Participating in these events proved to be quite successful in increasing our student enrollment and volunteer recruitment, in addition to the opportunities they provided to interact more with the broad network of community organizations and services in the DC area.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

September: **Jared Barton & Carolyn Carroll**

October: **Jennifer Sullivan**

*Jared Barton* teaches level 3B on Sundays and always brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm to his class. Jared often comes in on Saturdays to help out as a substitute teacher when needed. *Jennifer Sullivan* teaches level 2B on Thursdays and has served as a team leader for her team of teachers for several terms. She demonstrates a strong dedication to teaching and to her students and is currently pursuing her teaching certificate.

*Carolyn Carroll* teaches the Basic level in our new session on both Tuesday and Thursday mornings. When asked about her experience at LETC she said the following: At the beginning of each term, I tell my students that all of my grandparents were immigrants to this country. Most of them look at me with surprise on their faces when I go on to tell them that their teacher's grandparents could not speak, read, nor write English when they arrived in the U.S. I explain to the students that I want to help them because many people helped my grandparents to learn English. My interest in teaching ESL comes from my desire to help new immigrants along their journey to becoming citizens of the United States. My grandparents began that journey many years ago when they came from Sweden, and I believe that learning English was the one of the most important factors contributing to their success in this country. The desire to learn English that I see in my students makes me feel that they share this belief. For me, teaching ESL is a win/win experience - the students learn English and we volunteers experience not only the satisfaction of helping them to achieve that goal, but also the enjoyment of learning about other fascinating cultures. I feel it is privilege to be able to develop closeness with our students that enables me to explore and celebrate their varying ethnic identities.

It is evident that Carolyn, Jared, and Jennifer truly enjoy teaching and we are glad to have them as volunteers at Language, ETC. Thank you for all your time!



"I am thrilled that my volunteer teaching not only honors my own ancestors who have made my life possible, but also contributes to the vitality of the immigrant process as it continues through the LETC students in my classes,"  
Carolyn Carroll

