



# LETC Extra!

*"Improving the Lives of Immigrants Through Education"*

November 2005

## Inside this issue:

From the Executive Director	2
From the Program Director	2
Volunteer Coordinator Comments	3
Volunteer Stories	3
Board Members and Staff	4
Supporters	4
How you can help	4

## October - Student Story Contest Month

Last month we asked our students why they wanted to learn English and why they chose LETC. The responses were inspiring and rewarding to read. The stories described the impact we have on our students lives and the fantastic job our volunteers are doing. It is our student and volunteer stories that give the best picture of what LETC is.

### Jose Antonio Martinez Advanced ESL, Sunday AM

I came from El Salvador in search for a better life and to help my family. When I was in my country I studied English but the English that we learned was British. That's why I had trouble understanding the English in the U.S. Then I asked one of my cousins where would be a good place to study English. And he talked to me about the LETC at the church, Our Lady Queen of America. That's how I decided to study here. I started at the basic level. Now I am taking the advanced level. I've learned a lot since I've been in this school. Thanks to that now I have a better job where I speak English all the time. LETC has been really helpful. It helped me improve my life and the life of many other people. I've also told my friends and cousins about LETC because I believe it's a good place to study. Besides the English we can take computer courses or GED. And I've been thinking about that too. Now I have to find the time to do it.

I started to take English at Language ETC four years ago. I chose this institute because it fits in my schedule. I work from Monday to Saturday. Another reason why I am attending is I have learned a lot and the usage of my English has improved. This helps me to get involved in the community and to get better opportunities.

I have gained much more than language skills. I have met nice people, and specifically I have learned to admire the dedication from the staff that volunteer and work here. They care about immigrants. This makes me come every Sunday morning although I live in Virginia.

At Language ETC I find what I expect. It's about the atmosphere too. I have received knowledge and dedication. It is a place where the doors are always open. It is a place where people take care of people.

I want to say thanks to all the volunteers for their time, hard work and dedication. Their job inspires me to continue at Language ETC.

### Wilver Rivas 3A Sat PM 3 years at LETC El Salvador

I want to learn English to speak and understand better. I want to understand TV shows and movies. I want to speak English and sing a song English.

The classes have helped the most in my job and neighborhood.

I arrived in the US four years ago. I have had a good experience in LETC and learned English, how to use expressions, and conversation, using past, present and future. It has changed my life and my family.

CATALOGUE FOR PHILANTHROPY

Language ETC has been selected from a competitive field of nearly 250 candidates as a featured charity in the **2005 Catalogue for Philanthropy**. To learn more about the catalogue and to order a free copy go to [www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org/dc/2005/](http://www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org/dc/2005/)



### Lucia Cevallos - Ecuador

I am Lucia Cevallos. I am from Ecuador. Back home I used to work as an assistant of human resources in a travel agency. I actually teach Spanish in Reston from kindergarten to fourth grade.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is amazing how fast time goes by when you're having fun! The first term of our 12th year will end in a few weeks! While our mission remains the same we have grown each year and have welcomed many new students, volunteers and staff to Language ETC. With the addition of daytime classes and the expansion of all classes we now serve over 2400 students a year! Another amazing number is the number of volunteers that work with us each term, over 200! This Fall we also welcome our new Program Director, Jeanie Lee and our new Volunteer Coordinator, Muhammad Abdur Rahim. While Claudia Benitez is not new to LETC (she started as one of our students many years ago), she is also now part of our staff, serving as our Admissions Coordinator. Everyone has contributed to a great start of another successful year for LETC.

We are also excited to announce that LETC has been selected as one of the best small charities of the year as part of the [2005 Catalogue for Philanthropy](#) released Monday, Novem-

ber 14th. Supported by area foundations, the Catalogue profiles outstanding local organizations with budgets below \$2 million. Language ETC was selected from a competitive field of nearly 250 candidates. "Charities were selected for excellence, innovation, and cost-effectiveness--and for what they can teach us about the extraordinary ways that philanthropy works," said Barbara Harman, Executive Director of the Harman Family Foundation. "These are certainly among the best small charities in the Washington, DC region."

We are also grateful to have received funding support from the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs for this school year.

October turned out to be a sweet month for us in other respects as well. We held our first student story contest—challenging each class to get 100% participation (some of these stories are featured on the cover), those classes that had all their students submit a story were rewarded with a box of *Krispy Kreme* dough-



*Mercedes Lemp, Executive Director*

nuts. We thank **Krispy Kreme on Dupont Circle** for their generous donation of 10 dozen, we purchased an additional 8 dozen so that we could reward the many submissions.

While most of the news is good, we are sad to be saying goodbye to one of our board members, Karren DeSeve. She has been a valuable part of the organization and will be missed. With Karren's departure we now have an opening for a new board member. We are particularly interested in people with finance or public relations experience. If you are interested in serving on a wonderful board or know of someone who might be, please email [mercedes@languagetc.org](mailto:mercedes@languagetc.org).

I look forward to updating you in our Spring issue. —*Mercedes Lemp*

## FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Thanks to the strong support of the staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers, my first term as Program Director for Language ETC has been a natural and smooth transition.

One of the main program development goals I hope to achieve is the addition of program sites in the DC area. With the growing number of immigrants in the workplace, LETC hopes to build partnerships with local vendors to institute ESL support classes on site for employees. Teacher training will also be a priority every term. Language ETC will be offering trainings for all volunteers on various topics before and during the semester. As an example, one of the earlier



*Jeanie Lee, Program Director*

trainings will include a demonstration lesson using an actual LETC class. Volunteers will have an opportunity to learn good teaching strategies by observing professional ESL teachers and those affiliated in the field.

New additions to our program in-

clude two committees: Volunteer Advisory Group and the Fundraising Committee. Both groups will meet once a month to discuss programmatic improvements and fundraising events for Language ETC. The focus of both groups is to get volunteers involved outside of the classroom.

On my first day at Language ETC, it was clearly evident that the need and demand for ESL instruction was continuously growing. Language ETC has played a vital role in supporting the ESL population, and I look forward to being part of a dedicated organization whose mission is to educate low income immigrants of the DC metropolitan area. —*Jeanie Lee*

## VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR COMMENTS



**Muhammad Abdur Rahim, Volunteer**

Wow! What an incredible first semester at Language, ETC. The first term for me has been full of excitement, and great interaction

with students and volunteers. One of the great things about this position has been getting to know the many wonderful volunteers and students. It has also been gratifying to see students improve their English skills in just three months and to witness the increased use of our Language Lab by students on their own time.

One of the tasks I have begun this fall has been to reach out to area universities and other organizations in the hopes of recruiting more volunteers, but also to collaborate on train-

ings and other development opportunities. I am excited about getting even more people involved in the organization. As always, I look forward to everyone joining us in "Improving the lives of Immigrants Through Education." Thanks for all the support to the Staff, Board and the overall volunteer community. I am excited about a winter term, and appreciate the hard work and dedication of the entire Language, ETC family.

—**Muhammad Abdur Rahim**

## VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH



I began volunteering at LETC as a tutor just last year after a long career in communications with the Federal government. When I first met the delightful student assigned to me, I couldn't imagine why she had come to LETC - her English conversational skills were that good! But I soon learned she'd had little formal schooling either here or in her native country, so she was anxious to work on reading and writing English. We laughed about the fact that I have the opposite challenges as I struggle with her language (Spanish) -- I've got the grammar down, but stumble in conversation.

While I continue to enjoy my tutoring, I'm thrilled to be teaching a 2B class this year as well. And what I'm finding most fascinating about the classroom is the range of skills, learning styles, and backgrounds students bring. Each student is unique. A few are like the student I tutor - quick to speak but without much experience writing and reading. Some aren't literate at all in a first language. Others arrive with plenty of education, but no experience with the Roman alphabet. Still others have a fair grasp of written English, but aren't at all confident speaking. And they come from so many different countries and speak so many different languages! The 20 or so students in our 2B class this term come from 15 different countries and speak at least five different languages. Meeting the needs of such diverse students really keeps the teacher on her toes! But helping them work toward a common goal is immensely satisfying. And watching them come together and help each other along the way thrills me and gives me such hope for our shrinking world.

**Judie Guy, Level 2B Tuesday/Thursday am**

-----  
This my fourth semester at Language ETC and I am consistently impressed at what a fantastic organization it is. I have taught ESL at other schools both in the U.S and abroad, but have not found any to be as well-run as this one. The students are always positive, optimistic and upbeat, even after long days at work. The staff is always available and responsive, making sure we have the resources and training necessary to provide our students with the best education possible

The other teachers have also enhanced my Language ETC experience, My co-teachers and teams are altruistic, down-to-earth people who are eager to give back to the community. I always look forward to the night I teach because I know it will be an evening surrounded by quality people and challenging fun.

**Karen Saville, Level 4A**





2200 California St., NW  
Washington, DC 20008

*“Improving the Lives of  
Immigrants Through Education”*

**Our Supporters:**

- The Advisory Board
- The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
- The Corina Higginson Trust
- The Mayor’s Office on Latino Affairs
- Holy Trinity Church
- The Inter-American Development Bank
- The Jovid Foundation
- The Agnes and Eugene Meyer Foundation
- The State Education Agency
- The United Way
- The World Bank

A special thanks to **Our Lady Queen of the Americas Church**

**Board of Directors**

- Gerald J. Langan, Esq., *Chair*
- Susanne K. Bennet
- Ellen Bennett
- Frances F. Butler
- Jaime Contreras
- Karren DeSeve
- Francis P. Dicello, Esq.
- Renee L. Feather
- Kathleen Hendrix
- Robert Kanchuger, Esq.
- Edward R. M. Kane

**Staff**

- Mercedes Lemp  
*Executive Director*
- Jeanie Lee  
*Program Director*
- Muhammad Abdur Rahim  
*Volunteer Coordinator*
- Claudia Benitez  
*Admissions Coordinator*

**How You Can Help**

A small contribution goes a long way at Language, ETC. \$100 covers the tuition of one student for a full three month term, including books. While our fees are low, there are many students that find it difficult to allocate money to improving their education when faced with more immediate needs such as food and housing. Language, ETC admits all students, regardless of their ability to pay. To allow us to maintain this policy we would greatly appreciate a donation to our scholarship fund.

You can also contribute through the **Catalogue for Philanthropy** website at [www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org/dc/2005/language\\_etc\\_5456.htm](http://www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org/dc/2005/language_etc_5456.htm)

\_\_\_\_\_ Please allocate \$100 to the Scholarship fund.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please allocate \$200 to cover 2 scholarships.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please allocate the enclosed amount of \_\_\_\_\_ toward the scholarship fund.

\*Name as it appears on Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_

Card No \_\_\_\_\_ CC Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

From: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: Language, ETC Scholarship Fund  
2200 California St., NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
\*Please note we only accept Master Card and Visa.