



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In this issue we highlight just a few of our very impressive, and very hard working students. They are why we are here and are the best representatives of what we strive to accomplish.

Last week we were pleased to welcome Ward 2 Councilmember **Jack Evans** to Language ETC. After talking to some of our board members and taking a tour of the school he commented, "It is amazing to me that Language ETC can help educate 2,400 students each year with volunteers and a shoe string budget. They are dedicated to helping students, residents

and those in need, without the bureaucratic issues I see inside the DC Government—there are few agencies that could take a lesson or two."

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to **Suzanne Stackhouse**, our Program Director, who will be working part-time for us while we both make a transition; but with joy we welcome our new Volunteer Coordinator, **Kathy Chin**, who started with us a few months ago. Suzanne has contributed beyond expectations, an example of her dedication is demonstrated in her column, below.



*Mercedes Lemp, Executive Director*

Meanwhile, LETC continues to grow with each term, this year we will serve over 300 more students than last year!

## FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Approached by one of our younger students last fall about attending high school in DC, I was upset to discover that he had been denied entrance because he did not possess a Social Security card. After searching on the Internet about how to enroll a child in the DC Public Schools, I discovered the process was lengthy and confusing, especially to people who could not speak English. We set up a testing appointment and the student completed a lengthy four hour assessment. Next on the list were vaccinations. Not an easy process, especially since the immunization clinics were open only at certain



*Suzanne Stackhouse, Program Director*

times, had no Spanish speaking staff members, and the TB clinic was far away.

With a completed assessment test and an immunization card full of vaccinations, we went over to the high school to enroll. We went into the office and were promptly turned away because the student's residency documents were not appropriate. We returned to the school in late December and finally enrolled the student in classes. His progress so far has been great and his English has improved dramatically. He has adjusted well, made new friends within his age group, and is very excited about earning his high school diploma. See David's story on the cover.

## VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR COMMENTS



*Kathy Chin, Volunteer Coordinator*

Hello Everyone! Since joining Language, ETC's staff three months ago,

it's been an exciting and rewarding time to witness the commitment and achievements our students and volunteers have made into making our ESL program such a success.

As a former volunteer teacher of English-as-a-Foreign Language (EFL) in China, I can certainly understand the challenges of teaching English that our volunteers face: wondering if students are able to grasp the lessons taught, trying to incorporate fun and engaging materials into the syllabus, and worrying if they're good teachers or not.

With all honesty, I have never met a group of more committed and impressive volunteers, who keep returning to teach and tutor with us every term. For the coming semester, some of our volunteers have developed classes in conversation and pronunciation skills. It's every Volunteer Coordinator's dream!

As we approach the new term, I am looking forward to welcoming 50 new volunteers to Language, ETC's volunteer program. They have all been placed in either a teaching or tutoring position, and are sure to help make our ESL programs a continued success!

This page is reprinted with permission from the University of the District of Columbia/State Education Agency, Adult Education. These articles first appeared in The Literacy Advocate, the State Education Agency's newsletter, January/February 2005 issue. "

## *Adult Learners Hail from All Over the World*



Adult learners studying at **Language, ETC** hail from all over the world. The diversity of adult learners makes the program international and exciting. It is wonderful to see so many adult learners working on a common goal — to improve their English skills.

This class of adult learners chose to be photographed holding handmade signs with the names of their native countries to show the variety of places these adult learners call their native lands.

Pictured: Maria Carolina Andrade (Argentina); Gladys Castillo (Peru); Leonidas DeLeon (Guatemala); Laura Delgado (Colombia); Fausto Flores (Mexico); Leticia Garcia (Spain); Daniel Guerrero-Gonzalez (Spain); Ana Guerrero (Spain); Raul Heredia (Spain); Carlos Iglesias (El Salvador); Tae Jung (Korea); Pushpak Kunwar (Nepal); Ramon Menocal (Cuba); Justine Tiako Ngateheu (Cameroon); Tulga Nyamdorj (Mongolia); Elizabeth Rodriguez (Costa Rica); Chansamone Saykanya (Laos); Leopoldina Valesco (Mexico); and Jean Claude Wanji (Cameroon).

## **ESL Students Love Learning**

I am **Leandra Freitas** and I was born in Brazil. I'm half Japanese and half Brazilian. I moved from Japan in 1999. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and worked in marketing when I was in Japan. I came to Washington, DC in October 2004 to study English and find a job. I am attending ESL classes at **Language, ETC**. One of my greatest accomplishments as an adult learner has been learning to speak English. One year ago, I couldn't speak any English, but now I'm so happy that I can express myself. Attending English classes at Language ETC has helped me feel more confident. I am preparing to take the TOEFL exam with the support of my teachers at Language, ETC. I would tell others: Please, don't give up. It's not easy, but it's not impossible!"

—Leandra Freitas

I am **Rong Chen** and I am in the Level 5B ESL class at **Language, ETC**. I came to the U.S. half a year ago to join my husband. Some of my friends who had taken ESL classes at Language, ETC recommended it and encouraged me to attend. I feel that my participation in this course is a window for me to know this country and to benefit a lot from it. I am improving my language skills through the English class at Language ETC. Now I am more confident to communicate with others and express my own opinion. This class has also given me a chance to know and have a deep understanding of American society, culture, and the political system. Last term, English skills were taught through the presidential election. This provided me knowledge about the election and the process of campaigns. I feel that citizens of a country should have an understanding of its politics.

The dedication of the teachers at Language ETC inspires me a lot. They are always encouraging and helpful. Because of their diverse backgrounds, they provide us with practical advice and professional knowledge. Their encouragement makes me more courageous and assertive. I am now thinking about starting my own business.

What I want to share with other adult learners is what a teacher told me:

There is nothing to fear. When there is a will, there is a way.

—Rong Chen



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A special thanks to **Our Lady Queen of the Americas Church** that donates our facilities.

### **What is Language ETC?**

Founded in 1993 by Our Lady Queen of the Americas Church, Language ETC strives to meet the growing demand for English and other educational courses in the Washington DC area by offering low-cost classes in ESL, Spanish literacy, computer training, and Spanish GED preparation. LETC provides job placement assistance through a Job Bank and houses a computer assisted Language Lab that is open seven days a week to allow students to practice their speaking skills.

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### **How You Can Help**

A small contribution goes a long way at Language, ETC. \$90 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.

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