

Gaining the skills to thrive in their new home



The ILC Teacher Christiana Gianetta (standing) helping students with a lesson on their assigned Chromebooks.

Learning English is crucial, but so is learning to use digital resources. You can go on a job interview or to the doctor or to the grocery store, but can you apply for a job or order takeout online? Can you use telehealth or Zoom with your grandkids, or even use the internet to learn English?

From workforce development to personal development, digital literacy has been an increasingly important priority for The ILC students. With support from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Eastern Bank Foundation and MassHire Metro North, recently we finished a multi-year project to give every student access to a dedicated Chromebook. This allows for an even more customized learning experience.

When students enter The Immigrant Learning Center, their English language skill is evaluated

so they can be placed in the most appropriate class. However, students in the same class can have a range of comfort using online resources from those who have never touched a computer before to those who fit right into the digital world. Now, for the first time, each student's digital literacy is also evaluated so we can best meet their digital learning needs and track their progress.

In addition to evaluating each student, The ILC digital literacy instructor teaches workshops in every class related to the current English lessons. Teachers supplement their English curriculum with free online learning opportunities relevant to their students' needs. Education and career advisors use online tools to help students find jobs or apply for training. All in all, we are preparing The ILC students to become productive workers, parents and community members better than ever before.

The ILC students use their voice to welcome the newcomer

The “Dialogue of Civilizations” theater workshops and performances that started in conjunction with the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) in March, 2022, continue to provide many benefits to The ILC students. Of course they improve their English skills, public speaking and confidence. They also have the opportunity to use their voice to spread understanding by sharing their life experience with family, friends and the public.

Prior to the most recent performances at Harvard’s Agassiz Theatre, the A.R.T’s Learning Lead, Vahdat Yeganeh and The ILC’s Advising and Theater Coordinator Sally Nobinger appeared on WBZ-TV CBS News Boston’s Morning Mix

program to talk about our partnership, Dialogue of Civilizations, and The Walk with Little Amal.

Little Amal is a 12-foot puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian refugee child who has become a global symbol of human rights, especially those of refugees. Since July 2021, Amal has “walked” nearly 6,000, miles in 15 countries. This September, she starts her 6,000 mile journey across the United States here in Boston. The A.R.T. is planning one of the public events to welcome her, and The ILC students helped them workshop ideas for the event in August. The ILC students will also get the opportunity to participate in The Walk in September. This partnership is bound to continue giving immigrants a voice in exciting and unexpected ways.



The ILC Students in a workshop with American Repertory Theater to prepare for The Walk with Little Amal coming to Cambridge on September 7th



The A.R.T’s Vahdat Yeganeh and The ILC’s Sally Nobinger appeared on WBZ-TV CBS News Boston’s Morning Mix program to talk about our partnership, Dialogue of Civilizations, and *The Walk with Little Amal*.

Thank you, donors!

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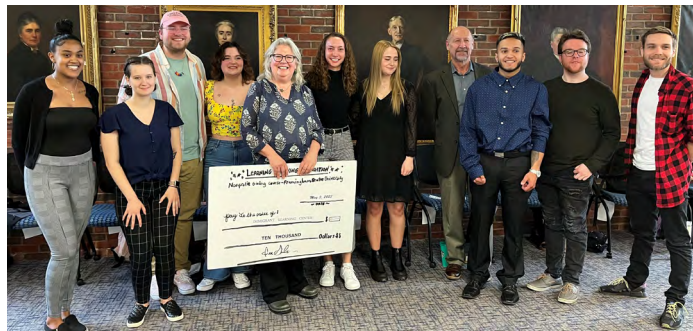
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Learning to support the community

A much younger cohort of donors joined the ranks of The ILC supporters this spring. Students at Framingham State University were learning about supporting their community through philanthropy in a class created by the Learning by Giving Foundation. This unique program gives college classes the opportunity to learn about the impact of philanthropy and do hands-on research of not-for-profits that support the local community. The final project is distributing a \$10,000 grant to the organization that impresses them the most. These students visited more than 20 organizations in Eastern Massachusetts and selected The Immigrant Learning Center!

Upon visiting The ILC, these students were particularly impressed with our literacy classes, which help students who have little to no literacy in their first languages and need specialized support so they don't fall through the cracks. Many of them also cited their own family's immigration stories as their motivation. One explained,

"If my loved ones had known about these classes sooner, their lives would have been very different. They would have fought for fair wages, interviewed for jobs they would have easily qualified for and sought legal help sooner." That's what these students and all our donors do when you give to The Immigrant Learning Center. Together, we change people's lives for the better.



The ILC Assistant Director of Development Ann Bausman (holding check) receiving a donation from students in Framingham State University's Learning By Giving Program.

An unforgettable experience

While The ILC's focus is on giving immigrants a voice through English and citizenship classes, sometimes the opportunity arises to express themselves in other ways. For years, we participated in "Window Arts Malden" by displaying student artwork in our front windows. One former student, Anna from Vietnam, who participated in Window Arts said that it led to more exposure for her with offers from people who were interested in exhibiting her work.

This summer, more students at The ILC had a chance to showcase their passion for art in an exhibition called "IamMigration: a lived experience." This community art project was the brainchild of Benjamin Jacques with the Gallery at Sanctuary in Medford. The open house featured paintings, photography, music, videos and more by immigrant artists, many of them students, former students or teachers at The ILC. The exhibit ran through July 15, and The ILC student's work was then transferred to the gallery at Urban Media Arts in Malden.

This exhibit was another opportunity to create connections and understanding between newcomers and the surrounding community. Given the opportunity to express anything they wanted through their art, some students choose to honor The ILC. Shirin from Iran shared a photo portrait of herself outside of The ILC and said that "If I am here today, it is because of the support of The

Immigrant Learning Center." Xuguang from China [pictured] painted The Immigrant Learning Center itself, which he calls the "Unforgettable School." Xuguang spoke almost no English when he enrolled in our Level 1 class. After nearly two years of studying five days a week, he succeeded in his goal of finding a better job just a few weeks before the exhibit. He was proud to showcase the place that is **"exactly where my dream started."**



The ILC student showcases his painting of The ILC called *Unforgettable School* in special exhibit of immigrant artists.

2023 Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Awards



BARRY M. PORTNOY
IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR
AWARDS BENEFIT

November 8, 2023 at the Royal Sonesta Boston
Nominations are due by September 18, 2023!

Here is your chance to marvel at the ingenuity, bravery and grit of the immigrant entrepreneurs that call Massachusetts home. Founders of biotechs, insurance agencies, cyber security firms and neighborhood bakeries take their noses from the grindstone long enough to support each other and share their stories. Equally as important, all funds raised will go toward giving immigrants a voice at The ILC. Join us!

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Giving Immigrants a Voice Since 1992

English transforms a parent's life

Day-to-day life can be a struggle in the United States for anyone who doesn't speak English, but if you're a parent, the stakes are especially high. When Rachida came to the U.S. from Morocco knowing very little English, she struggled to support her son the way she wanted to. She couldn't find work, help her son learn English or even take him to the doctor without help.

Learning English at The ILC turned things around for her. "English helped me to be a U.S. citizen, to get my driver's license, for credit card, for everything," she said. "I [can] go to hospital with my child without his dad." Her classes "[helped] so much. I love this school." English skills can enable parents to provide the kind of care and support that all parents want to offer their children.

There was still one crucial hurdle to clear. If Rachida wanted to ensure that she would never be separated from her son, she needed to become a citizen. "I believe this is my country now ... and I want to live here permanently, because my family is here," she explained. Rachida enrolled in our citizenship classes. The dedicated teachers and volunteers gave her extra help outside of class hours. She said that with the extra help, she didn't find it hard to pass the citizenship interview. Just three days before Mother's Day, Rachida swore her oath of citizenship and ensured her permanent place with her son in her new home.



Learning English helped Rachida support her family; becoming a citizen ensured they can stay together.

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