

Student Profile

Sharifa wears a hijab (headscarf).
Nieves wears jeans.

Sharifa speaks Somali. Nieves
speaks Spanish.

They grew up on different sides of
the world. They speak different lan-
guages, eat different foods and prac-
tice different religions. But today
they are close friends.

Sharifa and Nieves were strangers
when they met in their English 2
class at the English Learning Center.
They had begun school for similar
reasons: learning to understand peo-
ple in the community, learning to
understand people at her job, getting
a job, improve herself, navigate her



Nieves and Sharifa, English Students

new community, help those around
her who also don't speak English.

During class, they began practicing
basic English together – Hello, how
are you? What is your name? Tell
me about your family. And out of
those basic conversations, a bond
began to form.

Today, they laugh together through
the delights and struggles of learning
a foreign language — using the only
language they have in common: English.

Nieves and Sharifa choose not to
congregate with students who speak
their same native language, chal-
lenging themselves and one another
to practice English more. They both
say they like learning this way.

Sharifa and Nieves both have advice
for people coming to the United
States for the first time. Sharifa says
new immigrants need to study
English so they can learn the skills
she is learning — such as writing
her name and saying hello. Nieves
agrees — and adds that new immi-
grants need to practice English
reading and writing, not just speak-
ing. As for students who come to
the ELC, both Sharifa and Nieves
advise new students to come to
classes every night to improve their
English skills and their lives.

Also, they say, make some new
friends from around the world.

Inside This Issue:

2
**Letter from the
Executive Director**

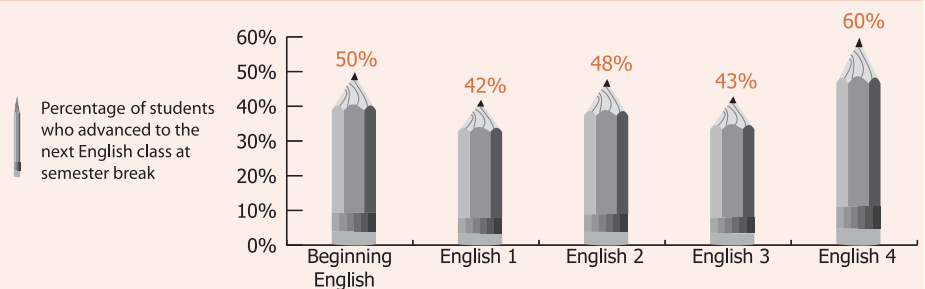


3
**Volunteer Highlights
& Opportunities**



4
Wish List

Student Progress Report



STAFF LIST

Sandy Aslaksen

Executive Director
612.871.5900 x1
sandy@osom-mn.org

Nicole Pettitt

Development Director
612.871.5900 x3
nicole@osom-mn.org

Marny Fyfe

Program Director
612.874.9963 x4
marny@englishlc.org

Claudia Holt

Volunteer Coordinator
612.874-9963 x2
claudia@englishlc.org

Mohamed Assalle

Van Driver/
Educational Assistant

Seyou Nurie

Student Records Coordinator

Sarah Shankle

Program Assistant and
Citizenship Coordinator

Alia Scanlon

Computer Lab Tutor and
Student Support Assistant

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Have you heard about the new classes offered at the English Learning Center?

H.E.L.P. classes, or Helping Enrich Learner Progress, began in May 2008. These volunteer-taught classes take place over semester breaks. In the past, students had 4–5 weeks of break with no class. With the addition of H.E.L.P. classes, students now have the opportunity to continue studying two nights a week during semester breaks.

Why H.E.L.P. classes? Two main reasons. First, our students don't want to take a break — they want to keep learning! When reminded of upcoming semester breaks, students consistently responded with moans and complaints. "No, teacher... please... more school." At a recent end-of-semester party, one student even brought a cake inscribed "Hope You Open Again Soon"! The second reason is obvious: students stay in school longer and learn more when their studies are not interrupted.

Student Writing

Editor's note:

Following are some English Level 3 writing samples. Where you see errors, please note we have kept the spelling and grammar in the notes exactly as our students wrote them. You are reading the authentic writing of adults who are learning to read and write in English.

I am very happy
Because I have a job,
I go to study English.
The weather is warm.
– Age 45

I am happy
I work Xray,
I eat lunch.
I buy a car.
– Age 26

I am not sad. I am happy.
The good weather. I speak
little English. I am very
happy. I need English for
the future. Maybe in the
future a teacher.
– Age 55

Preliminary numbers show this is true. Over half the student body attended the first round of H.E.L.P. classes — and 78 percent of those re-enrolled in our summer session. This is an improvement over the 65–70 percent of students that typically return after a break. With greater continuity in learning, we expect students' test scores to improve, as well.

We are excited about this new program at the English Learning Center. We know it will deepen our students' learning. We are also excited because this has created new possibilities for our volunteers.

I invite you to come and visit our classes and students. Come experience with our students their excitement as they gain the skills needed to succeed and thrive in the community. Perhaps you will find a special way to be involved here as well!

Warmly,



Sandy Aslaksen
Executive Director

The children are beautiful people. I have one child. She lives in Mexico. In the month of July, day thirteenth she has a birthday. She is very happy at this time. She is eight years. Sometimes I want to look at her face. I only call. The children are wonderful. They are the future of the planet.
– Age 28

Volunteer Highlights



Andy Ashton, ELC Teacher

For every one of the 100+ volunteers that work with us each year, there is a unique journey that brought them to the English Learning Center. And some journeys are more surprising than others.

In the case of Andy Ashton, that journey began in a search to improve his chances to enter medical school. Community service experience is an important part of the application, and he wanted to do something where he felt like he could make a difference. Some friends shared their experiences teaching English, and inspired him to come to the English Learning Center.

Like many volunteers, Andy didn't have experience working with immigrants when he began. In fact, his current career is completely unrelated to the volunteer position. Andy is a mortician.

Andy went through volunteer training, but when he began teaching his level four English class, he was still a little nervous about his lack of experience. He quickly learned that his fears were unfounded.

"It was much easier than expected. The students were very courteous, and the class was a relaxing atmosphere." Even without any teaching experience, Andy was a natural in

the classroom. Students scheduled to take assessments in the office asked if they could postpone their tests so as not to miss his lessons.

Even though Andy works full-time, takes college courses at night, is applying for medical school, and is training for his second marathon in the fall, he continues to make a significant commitment to the ELC.

"My volunteer time at ELC is very much a part of my life...It actually brings me an important break from the often hectic week. In fact, during breaks between semesters, I often feel as though something quite significant is missing from my weekly schedule."

Volunteer Opportunities



Looking for a way to get involved?

"No experience necessary!"

The English Learning Center is always looking for committed volunteers to teach English, math, citizenship and computer classes. The following are ways you can get involved:

English as a Second Language (ESL) Volunteers

M,T,W,Th

Volunteer hours: 5:45 – 8:45pm;

Class hours: 6:45 – 8:30pm

Lead a class of 10–15 adult immigrants and refugees in learning English. Books with lesson plans, materials (visuals, tapes, realia, etc.), and additional resources provided by the ELC and by staff members.

Math Volunteers

M,T,W,Th

Volunteer hours: 5:15 – 6:45pm;

Class hours: 5:30 – 6:30pm

Assist a group of 5–15 adult immigrants and refugees in Math.

You needn't be a "math person" to volunteer in a math classroom!

Students work through math workbooks at their own pace. Volunteers rotate around the classroom, assisting students one-on-one or in very small groups to explain new concepts and guide students through practice exercises.

Computer Volunteers

M,T,W,Th

Volunteer hours: 4:30 – 6:30pm

Assist computer students one-on-one during open lab time.



Claudia Holt,
Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteers assist students individually with computer skills and procedures. Volunteers may also have the opportunity to develop classroom projects.

The ELC is a great volunteer opportunity for people interested in education or connecting with the immigrant and refugee populations in Minneapolis.

For more details please contact:
Claudia Holt, Volunteer Coordinator
Email: claudia@englishlc.org
Phone: 612.874.9963 ext. 2

ELC Wish List



It's back to school time... and you can help ELC students prepare for Fall Semester. If you are picking up supplies for your family, please consider grabbing some extras to donate to the ELC. Pencils, with good erasers or 8 ½ x 11" lined notebooks are always in short supply around the school.



As for bigger items, our computer students need a scanner for use in the Computer Lab. These students have some technology projects coming up this fall, and a scanner would be a great help.

Back-to-school means cooler evenings. A donation of coffee can go a long way in providing a warm, welcoming environment for students braving the cold to come to school.

Make your donation today!

The English Learning Center is a program of Our Saviour's Outreach Ministries



The English Learning Center

2315 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Phone: 612.874.9963

Fax: 612.871.0017

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Thanks for your partnership in
educating immigrants and refugees.

Our Mission

**Educationally empowering
immigrants and refugees toward
self-determination.**

Every gift you give — whether in-kind, monetary, or your time — makes getting an education possible.

Your partnership provides...

- Classes in English, computers, math and citizenship exam preparation
- Transportation service for students
- Referral and advocacy services for students
- Training for volunteer instructors

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Minneapolis, MN
Permit No. 31801