

ELC Wish List

What? The Novel: *Holes* by Louis Sachar

How many? 20 copies — new or lightly used

Last fall, students in English levels 5 and 6 started reading novels. For many students, this is the first time they have read an entire book — even in their native language. This fall, they will read the novel *Holes* by Louis Sachar.

Please help facilitate the power and wonder of reading by donating a copy, or copies, of this book to our English students. You can drop them off at the ELC office, or call us at 612.874.9963 to make arrangements.

Make your donation today!

Donate online at osom-mn.org/donate or use enclosed envelope.

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



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

New Website!

Check us out online at
osom-mn.org

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



Student Profile

Marta is just like the other students at the English Learning Center — she has left a familiar life thousands of miles away. In Marta's case, she has done this for one reason — to meet the basic needs of her family in Ecuador.



Marta, English Student

The courage to make such a sacrifice is not new to Marta, and she credits her mother for being her inspiration. "My mother has always made sure of one thing — to put food on the table. Even though we

have never had much, my mother always made sure we had food," she says.

For decades, Marta's family has been subsistence farming in Ecuador — growing corn, yucca, greens and potatoes on their 12-acre farm. However, times have become increasingly difficult and their subsistence has been threatened.

The decision to come to Minnesota was daunting for Marta, but also obvious. In a country where the minimum wage is \$100 per month and jobs are scarce, she knew what she had to do — even if it meant leaving behind her children. So, Marta and her husband made the 3,300 mile journey north, determined to support the family that they left behind.

Upon weeks of arrival in Minnesota, Marta enrolled in English, math and computer classes at the English Learning Center. "I really need to communicate well in English to get a good job. That's why I'm coming to school," Marta said on her first day. For almost a year now, she has been juggling changing work schedules in order to send money home. She attends school two to three nights a week, quickly advancing

through English classes. As if it weren't enough responsibility to support her family thousands of miles away, Marta has extended her support to other students who are new to the English Learning Center — introducing them to the school and orienting them to their new environment.

So, Marta continues, without hesitation to support her family from afar. It's been a difficult journey and far from ideal. But she moves forward with an impenetrable grace and perseverance for her family's well-being — and as an inspiration to all of us that know her.

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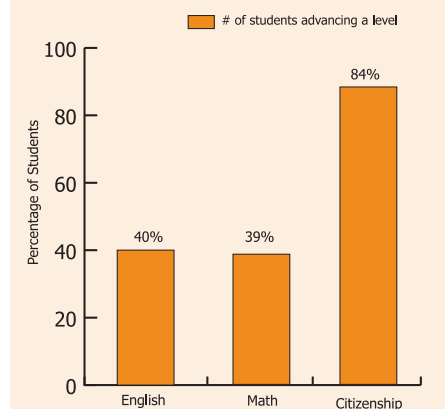
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Our students made the following progress during the 08-09 school year:



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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

In this issue, I'm happy to present you with our newly-designed, compact 2008 Annual Report. During these difficult financial times, we want to be as frugal as possible with your generous donations — funneling as many of your funds as we can directly to our classrooms. To that end, we are economizing with a down-sized report and capitalizing on the postage we would have already spent sending you this newsletter.

In this new, compact report, you'll find much of the same information found in the full-size reports we've sent to supporters in previous years: program outcomes, financials and a board list. A complete donor list can be found on our website. And my favorite part — the stories of lives changed through your support and our work — can be found on the front page of this newsletter.

Our Annual Report may be smaller, but our program remains full-sized! We are proud of our students' accomplishments as they work to improve their English, math and computer skills. We see success here every day — both large and small.

If you have any questions about our performance in 2008, please feel free to contact me. I'm happy to chat over the phone or even over coffee.

We are grateful for your continued support of our students, and I know our students are grateful, as well. Together, we know the future is bright.

Warmly,



Sandy Aslaksen
Executive Director

Student Writing

Editor's note:

Following are some English 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 like to walk outside because it go shopping. I like to to the lake.
– **English 1 student from Somalia – 60 years old**

My first job was an embroider. I did it at home because I wanted to help my mom to cook and to did the chose. I embroided the clothes for women and I worked it for about five years. After that my eyes had a problem and then I decided to quit the job.
– **English 5/6 student from Viet Nam – 45 years old**

Students in my class are from Somaliya, Ethipia, Togo, Icuador, Tibet, Vietnam, U.S.
– **English 2 student from Somalia – 70 years old**

I hope and pray you, are in good health and spirit, and this writing finds in your best mood. Am writing this letter in my capacity and understanding as one of your student in class 4. Recently I was admitted in ELC as a student, with no paying them. In the Center, there are very good teachers. Realy speaking an on behave of student in the Center, we satisfied the admistation of ELC and how the learning are organized. I apologise my readers eny inconvenience in my writing for my poor English language which can cause some times bad expression.
– **English 4 student from Somalia - 78 years old**

Volunteer Highlights

We are pleased to introduce a new staff member to our readers. Yer Lee began working as the Volunteer Coordinator at the English Learning Center on Monday, July 6th.

We are very excited by the enthusiasm, expertise and abundant skills she brings to her work and the organization.

Yer graduated from Metropolitan State University with a Bachelor of Arts, where she majored in Professional Communications and Creative Writing. Her most recent work experience has been as Volunteer Coordinator and Communications Coordinator at AccountAbility Minnesota — a non-profit organization providing free tax preparation and financial services to low-income individuals and families. Similar to the English Learning Center, their services are delivered primarily by volunteers. Yer interviewed, trained and managed over 300 volunteers for that organization. She is also bilingual in Hmong and English.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Yer as she joins the staff of the English Learning Center and Our Saviour's Outreach Ministries!

And more introductions are in order! This spring, a new kind of volunteer joined the ELC Team — an Urban Agriculture Project Planner, Jennifer Nishwitz. Big name, big task — but

Thanks to Allegra Printing in Edina, MN and the Allegra Printing Footprint Fund!

They donated services, product, time and installed logos on our new van.

ELC students and Van Driver, Mohamed (fourth from right), enjoy their van's facelift.

what does it mean? Well, the ELC is considering beginning a unique outdoor classroom: a school farm. Jennifer is tackling the task of helping us explore the viability of the project. We envision the farm — and its complimentary farmers' market — would be a participatory learning project for the immigrant and refugee community in our neighborhood. The project would address issues of food security, nutrition, and job and entrepreneurial skill development. Stay tuned!

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.

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:
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Phone: 612.874.9963 ext. 2.

