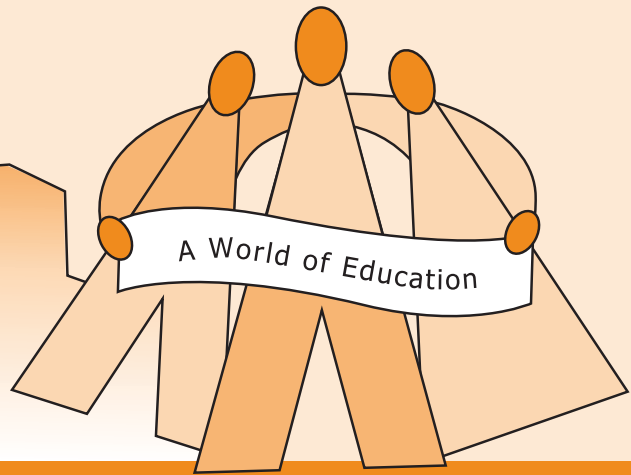


# English Learning Center NEWS



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## Student Profile

When Karim Jimale came to the United States as a young teenager, he didn't speak any English.



**Karim Jimale,**  
*English and Math Student*

After several years, he began to pick up some verbal skills, but not reading or writing. He came to the ELC for the first time at age 20. During his time at the ELC, Karim has worked hard to persevere in the face of many challenges.

Like millions of other Somalis now scattered throughout the world, Karim fled his country to escape the civil war — which had severely

limited the opportunities available to him while growing up. Refugees like Karim encounter great challenges navigating their new homeland. Differences in language and culture can make newcomers feel like they're starting their lives over from scratch. Now living in Minnesota — a cold climate in an industrialized country — Karim and others must learn how to dress for the weather, how to identify different foods at the grocery store, how to use a checking account, and how to adapt to odd practices, such as daylight savings time. Many adjustments must be made.

But like so many other refugees, Karim pushes forwards. He takes English and math classes, and has shown himself to be a classroom leader, helping other students when they struggle. He has learned test taking skills — advancing from circling every answer proposed on his multiple-choice tests to

examining each possible answer in order to choose the correct one.

Recently, Karim came to the ELC to express his desire to volunteer to make the school a better place. He now volunteers a few times a week to help maintain classrooms.

And Karim's passion to help others extends beyond the walls of the ELC to the greater community. He recently received an award of appreciation from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation for his services as a volunteer. Karim volunteers to play basketball and other games with the kids in their program. "I like the kids," Karim says, "and basketball is always fun." He also helps them clean their facilities.

Karim's dedication to improve himself and his new community is an inspiration to everyone who knows him.

## Inside This Issue

1 Letter from the Executive Director

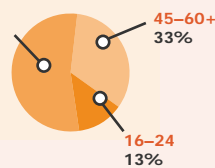
2 Volunteer Highlights & Opportunities

3 Wish List

## Student Demographics

Current enrollment: 121

25-44  
54%



Age

Men  
45%



Gender

Asian  
8%

Latino  
25%

African  
67%

Ethnicity

## STAFF LIST

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## Letter from the Executive Director

### *Dear Friends,*

It is the middle of winter now. The days are just ever so slightly longer, but the evenings are still dark and cold. Yet in the midst of what seems like the longest part of a Minnesota winter, the students still come. And so do the volunteers who teach our classes.

Most of these students have come to Minnesota from much warmer climates. Many are surprised by the snow — and just how cold it can be — and are still learning to cope with these new experiences. Learning English is essential, but there are so many other things to learn as well. They are diligent in their persistence to learn.

The volunteers who teach these diligent learners show up faithfully, too. They come from local colleges and universities, businesses and congregations, and from the local community. In the middle of winter, it could be so easy to hunker down and stay home — waiting for the first signs of spring. But even in the dark and cold — they still come. They are faithful in their persistence to instruct.

Students and volunteers alike come to the English Learning Center — to a place of warm welcomes and friendly faces. Whether volunteer or student — they come to learn — crossing many barriers to grow in their understanding of our increasingly multi-cultural world.

Their persistence inspires me. I invite you to come and see what is happening at the ELC. Come and learn about this important work. Even in the midst of a dark and cold winter, much growth is happening here!

Warmly,



Sandy Aslaksen  
Executive Director

## Student Writing

### **Editor's note:**

Following are some thank you notes our students wrote to their teachers. 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 just beginning to learn to read and write in English.

Dear Teachers,  
Thanks for the teachers all of them.  
Thanks for the time thank you for helping me learn English. This. is. The. First time I have been to school.

### **Beginning English Student**

Dear Teachers,  
I am so happy to be here at this school and to be helped to learn english. Befare coming to this school I could not make a sentence even though I am not perfect I can do more than where I am English now and I thank all teachers.

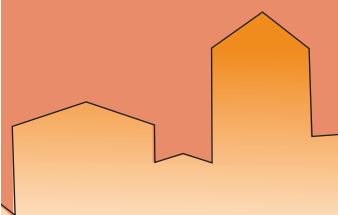
### **English Level 1 Student**

Dear Teachers,  
Thank you very much for teachers. Happe good vacation, happe good crismace. I hope good very nice all teachers and see again next montes. Thank you happe good day.

### **English Level 3 Student**

Dear Teachers,  
Thank you for helping me learn mathematics I learned the form and the process of mathematics because it is different in Spanish.

### **Math Level 4 Student**



## Volunteer Highlights

ELC volunteer Nhi Thai attributes her passion for teaching English to walking down a similar path as her students. She came to the U.S. as a child, and was an ESL student herself for many years.

While volunteering at the ELC through a service-learning program of the University of Minnesota, Nhi drew not only on her personal experiences, but on what she was learning in her University coursework, to connect with students and bring classes alive. Her University classes taught her how to effectively teach students from many cultural backgrounds, as well as practical classroom management lessons such as, “Write bigger. Talk slower.”

During her time at the ELC, Nhi’s dedication to students’ success in English extended beyond her regular teaching schedule. She created a computer program for upper-level students to practice their listening and reading skills in the ELC’s



*Teresa, an ELC student, using the computer program Nhi created*

computer lab. The program was flexible enough for other teachers to integrate into their lesson plans — or students could practice independently during their free time.

All of Nhi’s hard work paid off when she would see the enthusiasm her students had to learn and take advantage of getting an education — just like she did so many years ago when she first arrived in the U.S.

## 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:  
Claudia Holt, Volunteer Coordinator  
Email: [claudia@englishlc.org](mailto:claudia@englishlc.org)  
Phone: 612.874.9963 ext. 2

*ELC Educational Assistant, Mohamed, helping an English Level 3 student with her assignment*



## 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
- Referral and advocacy services for students
- Transportation service for students
- Training for volunteer instructors

*Make your donation today!*

*Donate online at [www.englishlc.org/donations.htm](http://www.englishlc.org/donations.htm) or use enclosed envelope.*



*Your donations make computer classes possible for students like Teresa*

## ELC Wish List

scanner for computer lab  
pencils (with good erasers)  
notebooks (8 1/2 x 11)  
3-ring binders (red, 1")  
dry erase markers and erasers  
comfortable chairs for student room  
gift cards from Cub Foods,  
Rainbow Foods, Aldi, Target  
Kleenex  
coffee  
creamer  
sugar  
paper towels

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



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Thanks for your partnership in  
educating immigrants and refugees.