

The Spirit of Broadway

“A Place of Hope”

50 W. BROADWAY
SOUTH BOSTON, MA 02127-1016

www.ndecboston.org
SPRING 2005

Adult Learners Teach “New” Teachers

...In their own words

Students teaching teachers? Indeed that is what happened on Tuesday March 22, 2005 at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, U Mass, Boston. Three students from Notre Dame Education Center, seated left to right Theresa Lieu, Diana Karanxha and Edward Woods shared their experiences of trying to learn a new language in a new country, of returning to a classroom after many years to attain a GED, of integrating the role of a ‘student’ into their busy lives. Adult learners already wear many ‘hats’: parent, worker, citizen, community leader and now, **STUDENT.**



Theresa Lieu was born in Vietnam. She is a transition student at NDEC who shared, “My whole family lived in a poor village, working hard on the land to grow enough food to eat.” Theresa remembers so many changes when she came to America “I noticed how important it was to speak and to understand English. Knowledge and education are important for everyone. **“Without education, you will be like a frog, living at the bottom of the well, or, like a bird, trapped in a cage.”** A friend told Theresa about NDEC. “You will like it there-it is called a Place of Hope. People teach you so good!” Theresa thrives each day to reach her goals. “It is very difficult being an adult, learning to speak English well and being a good parent and a worker.”

Edward Woods, who recently passed his GED tests, shared with the new teachers, “Coming back to school after 20 years was very difficult for me. I had

special support from an agency called C.A.R.(Career Advancement Resources) and from the teachers at NDEC.” He added, **“Be patient, teachers. Encourage your students. Remember adult learners have had many experiences in their**

lives-some positive and some very difficult. There were many times when I wanted to give up, but my teachers continually supported me and affirmed my goal-to get a high school diploma. **Passing my GED is the first accomplishment I have ever achieved in my life”**

Diana Karanxha left Albania 3 years ago. At NDEC her goal is to finish ESOL level 4 and to learn skills necessary to enter the job market as an accountant, a position she held in Albania. Diana shared the richness of being in class with people from so many different countries and cultures. “Here, in my class, are many professionals who worked as chemists, architects, accountants and doctors in their own countries. Learning English is a key I use to open my dream door.” **Diana advised new teachers to be friendly and to discuss different issues, such as solving job schedule problems, fairness in the work place and how to integrate into a new country while preserving and appreciating one’s own culture and roots.**

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PANELISTS FOR SHARING WITH SINCERITY AND OPENNESS. NDEC IS VERY PROUD OF YOU!

Civic Participation

THE POWER OF THE VOTE

Political issues are very important to our students because so many come from countries where there is much unrest and their opportunity to vote is denied

The presidential election seems like light years ago, but for many of our students it was their first chance to participate in a dry run of the process of a free and democratic election. Political issues and voting are very important to our students because so many come from countries where there is much unrest and their opportunity to vote is denied.

The week before the general election, teachers were given a packet of information from the voter education committee, which was organized to assist our students in becoming informed voters. Time was devoted to review and discuss major issues such as: Health Care, Education, Jobs and the Economy. The materials used in the classroom were to increase awareness and comprehensive understanding of issues: *Election Words to Know*, *Candidate Scorecard*, *Health Care*, *Education*, *Economy and Government and Budget Deficits*, *Where they Stand*, and the *Massachusetts Voter Bill of Rights*. The student lounge was transformed into a voting headquarters and on Monday, November 1, a mock election was held. Results: Kerry 76% Bush 33% Other 1%.



Max Mad-Toing calling his Senator

THE POWER OF THE VOICE AND THE PEN

One of the skills that we try to instill in our students is to discover the power of the voice and the pen (computer). Circumstances which impact our students' daily lives in a threatening way need to be addressed.

In February, President Bush's FY 06 budget cuts for ABE looked like there would be a 66% decrease, so the students and staff hurried to make their voices heard.

A staff member attended the emergency meeting called by Mayor Menino to galvanize the agencies which would be impacted. Students and staff wrote or called their Congressional Senators and Representatives. They wrote with passion and anxiety. "If anything, I hope that the funding will be increased, as there is a waiting list in all agencies and adults are going to get discouraged if they have to wait too long" was one man's plea. "In my country, I worked mines for 40 years and immigrated to the United States to get a better life. I urge you to vote against the President's proposed cuts for adult education". And one student simply and concisely wrote, "Educated people make this country stronger and smarter."

Where Are They Now?

following up on recent graduates

Philip Arndi- Wentworth Institute

Chris Boutwell- US Navy

Dayhne Cayo- Year Up/Internship at Boston Medical Center with 18 college credits at Cambridge College

Danny Deckert- Bunker Hill Community College

Monique Denand-Health courses at ODWIN

Ali Donlan- Quincy College

Lucien Dorleen- Presently applying to schools for post-secondary education

Marie Gerard-Bunker Hill Community College-Nursing Program

Jazmine Joyce- Certification in Early Childhood Development/A.B.C.D.

Mat Kelley-Bunker Hill Community College

Lahai Kumalak-Labouré Nursing College

Sean McColgan- Sophomore at New England College

Pat McDermott- Bunker Hill Community College

Jenna McLain- Raising her daughter Jayta and applying to Roxbury Community College

Stacey Magee- Full time employee at Marian Manor

Chris Mangone- US Navy

Rob Shaulis- Employed at Allied Security and a temporary job at Gillette

Katie Tedeschi- Interning at Cambridge Community TV, produced a piece on Brazilian dance. Starting General Education classes at Bunker Hill and planning to transfer to Emerson College for film production

William Westmoreland-10 month Computer Program/Internship at Boston Health Care for the Homeless

Congratulations to our winter 2005 EDP Graduates

Richard S. Padmore and Yu-Feng Zhang



NDEC Supports Tsunami Victims

Student and staff donations were voluntarily collected from March 7-17.

NDEC proudly donated a check for **\$1150** to OXFAM AMERICA. While the greater population of our students are struggling to make their own ends meet, their generosity and spirit of giving is grand. Our own NDEC community is made up of many immigrants from all over the world. We wanted to actively show our support for the loss that so many

families experienced from the Tsunami disaster.

A Message from Anne Metrick-Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As I review the final draft of this newsletter, I think of the last sentence of our mission statement. "Therefore the programs offered and the style of learning will provide for reflection on the individual and collective experience of the students and teachers." Imagine our students having the pleasure of helping teachers at U Mass Boston understand the complexities of being an adult learner! We use the words "critical social analysis as their tool for understanding the complexities of the world and responding to them." Check pages 2 and 3 respectively for evidence of this. Our students took the exercise of voting for the President of the United States very seriously and also felt confident asking him to reconsider budget cuts that would affect their lives. Page 3 visually explains the depth of the compassion of students and staff for others.

We know that we have a large population of adults who are yearning to learn, to better their job possibilities and to provide for their families. Our staff works diligently to keep pace with the needs of our present community of learners to provide relevant information and resources. At the same time we are aware of the need to open our classroom to more adults who need our services.

An open and inclusive community that offers educational possibilities, new directions and support to adult learners is our reality because of your support and encouragement. Thank you for the gift of time that many of you give to volunteering, for the gift of money that helps us feel somewhat secure with budget cutbacks. Most of all thank you for empowering the staff to make our mission statement a reality.

Anne M. Metrick



NDEC Students SPEAK Vol II

A Dream About a House By Yan He (ESOL 4)



I dream I can own a house someday. No matter if it is small or large. I just want to own my own house. I can paint it with the color I like best. I can decorate it with Chinese water-painting. I can cook something that I like and won't offend anyone. I can take a shower as long as I want, enjoy the sunshine on the porch in my favorite clothes, garden flowers or plant fruit trees in my yard.

In some ways, I want my house to be some kind of warehouse. I can stock it with many things from my family and my friends. When I touch them, they will remind me of all good things. I can stock my happiness, my misery, my anger here. I can get energy here. I can recover my confidence here.

*Notre Dame Education Center
"A Place of Hope"
50 West Broadway,
Boston, MA 02127
T: 617.268.1912 F: 617.464.7924*

*Anne M. Metrick
Executive Director*

*Esther Leonelli
Program Director*

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*Editor, Designer, Layout:
Lynne Brilliant*

*Contributors to this issue: Emily
Heck, Johanna Jacobson, Paula
Maloney, Anne M. Metrick, Sr.
Maureen McLaughlin SND, Sr.
Maureen Madden SND, Sr. Monica
Madden SND, Sr. Mary Mulligan
SND, LaSalette Ouellett SBS*

Your comments are always welcome.

What's New at NDEC?

A new logo

A little info on how the logo came to be...

The dynamic energy of the educational ministry of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur is represented by the "swirl" which is found in all of their logos. Our mission at Notre Dame Education Center (NDEC) provides educational and support services for adults in the Boston community. NDEC is one aspect of this congregation of women religious whose mission is "educating for life" around the world.



In designing a new logo for the center, staff focused on defining NDEC's mission and how we want others to see us. Our students see us as a "*A Place of Hope*". We feel this logo reflects an open and inclusive community that offers educational possibilities, new directions and support to adult learners.

Year of the Rooster: Learning About Chinese Culture

Our Chinese students brought the celebration of their New Year to NDEC on February 8. Chinese pictures and symbols decorated the student lounge and students brought traditional food to sample. Theresa Lieu, transition class student spoke to the staff and students. Here's what we learned:

This is the most important festival for Chinese people. The celebration begins the first day of the first lunar month. There is cleaning and decorating the home with symbols of good luck. **Red brings good luck to you and me.** New clothes are bought, rice bins filled to the brim, quarrels are mended and debts paid. Blooming plants symbolize rebirth and new growth and it is of utmost importance to have flowers and floral decorations. Every house must have a candy tray to start the year sweetly. The tray is arranged in either a circle or octagon and is called the Tray of Togetherness.



The most important event is the reunion dinner. Children make every effort to be home with their parents on New Years Eve. Foods like, a whole fish, which represents togetherness and abundance. For good health and prosperity, a chicken with head, tail and feet symbolizes completeness. Noodles should be uncut as they represent long life.

At midnight, firecrackers are set off to carry away any evil spirits. All lights are turned on in the house to chase away bad luck hidden in every corner. On the first day of the New Year, people dress in their new clothes and visit relatives. Children kneel and pay respect to their elders, and in return they receive a little red packet with money inside. **"Nothing unpleasant is allowed to happen on this day to ensure good fortune for the rest of the year."**

The Joy of Volunteering: Answering A Need by anonymous

Imagine carrying a secret about yourself for 30+ years that you felt you could not share with anyone. The secret involved the lack of a certain skill that made you feel very inadequate. You were too shy to reveal this lack to your spouse, your friends or even your children. How hard that must be! Then, imagine that one day a person comes into your life who can help you overcome this deficiency. This is a true story.

The student and tutor wish to be anonymous, so we'll call our student Suzy, and the tutor Joe. Suzy and Joe met at NDEC's tutoring center. Joe was to help Suzy with math for the GED test. After meeting with Joe for a few sessions, Suzy began to feel comfortable enough to reveal her secret to Joe. What was the secret? Suzy didn't know how to determine percentages. When she walked into a store, and saw an item for sale with a discount, she never knew if she could afford to buy the item. "How much will that item cost if I can take the discount? Did I bring enough money with me to buy it?" It seemed like everybody but Suzy, could figure this out. Suzy never wanted anyone to know that she couldn't do this "simple" arithmetic. Joe answered the need. They spent that and several more sessions on percentages and how to determine store discounts. Then came the day of the "test". Joe tested Suzy on all sorts of percentages, $2\frac{1}{2}\%$; $3\frac{1}{4}\%$. Suzy knew them all! Suzy couldn't wait to go to the store! A savvy shopper was born and a frustrating secret was put away forever.

Answering a need like Suzy's is just one of the many joys of volunteering. Helping to relieve frustrations and open new avenues to self-confidence is all a part of what the volunteers tutors at NDEC do every day. Since September 2004, nearly 1000 hours of direct service have been provided to our students and at least 46 students are directly served each week. Stories like that of Suzy and Joe are happening now. April 17-23, 2005 is National Volunteer Week. We are very proud of our volunteers and we thank them for the important work they do to answer our students' needs.

Interested in Volunteering?? Please call Michelle Moore at 617-268-1912 x 246.

Cultural Story Hour

Students from all over the world came together to share information about their cultural traditions, their interactions with people on a day-to-day basis in the United States, and the advice they want to give to all cultures to help promote a world full of peace and respect. Three Cultural Story Hour sessions took place on Thursday, April 14th from 9:30-10:30 am, 11:30-12:30 pm and 6:30-7:30 pm. This year, we heard stories from 32 students from Albania, Brazil, Burma, Cape Verde, Chad, China, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, England, Haiti, the Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, the Slovak Republic, Somalia, the Sudan, the United States, and Vietnam. The song "We are One" by Joyce Johnson Rouse was sung.



l-r: Hollis Owens USA (GED)



NDEC Students participate as a listeners

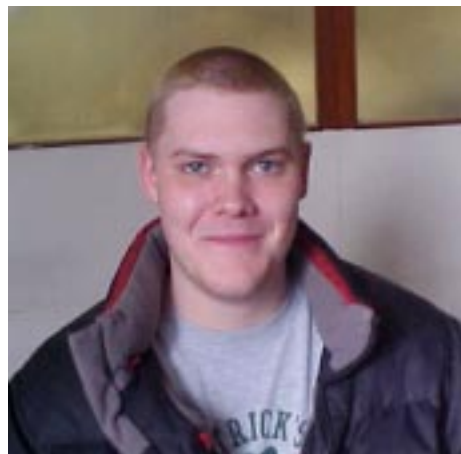


Huong Ly, Vietnam (ESOL 4)

Back *inTo* School

Billy Grout – Academic Diploma Student - Dorchester

Throughout my life, I have made some decisions that have changed my life for the long run. I moved to a new school in the seventh grad, and from the first day I stepped through the door, I didn't want to be there. My parents forced me to go there because they believed it was the best place for me. However, ever since I was little, sports pretty much ran my life. I always hoped I could go to a big high school where there was a good sports program. I got the exact opposite. When I entered this school, it was the first year the school opened. There were only 40 people in my class and the school was never big enough for a sports program. I was miserable the whole time I was there, and throughout the years, barely passed all my classes. When I hit my junior year, I had my worst year yet. I got kept back. I went through my second year with just as many problems as the first. I had the chance to take summer school to advance to my senior year, but instead I decided to go to another school. I was not fully confident that I would make it through my last year. I chose to take night school instead to finish my credits. I enrolled at Notre Dame Education Center in 2004 and finally I was into graduating more than ever. People in my class have been through some of my same struggles. Everyone here tries to help. Before coming to NDEC, the thought of college made me sick because I hated school so much. This school has given me hope in my education and brought back the thought of college to me.



Cultural Story Hour



Top: Charles Madi Okin, Democratic Republic of Congo (Transition)

Bottom: Edelyne Thomas, Haiti (ESOL 3) with Emily Heck ND AmeriCorps and Cultural Story Hour Coordinator



l-r: Sr. Maureen McLaughlin SND, Cepriana Zandi, Philippines (Transition), with her husband, Vincent, and mother-in-law, Phyllis.



Top: l-r Kuk Chun Wong, China (ESOL 3), Angele Louis-Jean, Haiti (ESOL 3)

Bottom: Dalal Farah, Somalia (ESOL 4)



**We all live on the same Earth, we fish and swim in the same oceans
We breathe the same air and gaze at the very same moon.
We feel the warmth of the same sun, WE ARE ONE.***

*Chorus from the song "We Are One"

NOTRE DAME EDUCATION CENTER
50 West Broadway
South Boston, MA. 02127-1016
Phone: 617-268-1912 TDDY
Fax: 617-464-7924
www.ndecboston.org

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ADULTS
are the
first responders
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Give The Gift
Of
EDUCATION

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