

Notre Dame Education Center

The Spirit of Broadway

50 W. BROADWAY
SOUTH BOSTON, MA 02127-1016

“A Place of Hope”

www.ndecboston.org
March 2006

Students at NDEC Exhibit Writing Skills

Did you know that Christopher Columbus discovered Haiti in 1492, the same year he discovered America? Or that in Thailand elephants come in two different colors? Or that cows are special in China where farmers wash their cows like Americans wash their cars? And that Albania, although a small country, has two seas, the Adriatic and the Jon?

In “NDEC Students Speak”, written entirely by students from many of the 52 countries represented at Notre Dame Education Center, articles are generally drawn from students’ lives in their countries of origin.

“The elephant is the oldest animal in Thailand,” and the symbol of the country, we learn from Nipa Thangjariyatam, who adds “we have two different color elephants, grey and white.” The grey elephant is familiar to Americans, while the rare white is found only in Thailand where it is reserved for members of the royal family.



Christmas is celebrated differently on the Caribbean island, Trinidad and Tobago, according to Agnes Tracey, who writes, “Here (in the U.S.) people do a lot of shopping.” On Trinidad and Tobago they paint and polish their houses in preparation for dining on freshly slaughtered pig, visit family and friends and have door-to-door singing. Christmas is like a family reunion. This past holiday, Agnes writes, “Sixty of us gathered at one of my sisters’ houses on Christmas.”

The coffee plant originated in Ethiopia and its name stems from the region known as Cafa, we are told by Alemnesh Chiti, who also reminds us that

Ethiopia is the home of many marathon runners. (A quick check of the Boston Marathon website indicates that Hailu Negussie from Ethiopia took last year’s Boston Marathon and Fatuma Roba, also from Ethiopia, was the first African female to win three consecutive Boston Marathons and the first African female athlete to win an Olympic Gold in the marathon.)



The warm, humid weather that greeted Valeriy Petrovich when he arrived from Russia seemed very strange compared to his country. He was happy to “see friendly, smiling people around ready to help you at every moment.” Very soon he wrote, “I understood that this country gave every person a chance for education, for getting a good occupation, to become rich and independent, and to have a happy, happy life.”

Loan Ho, who is originally from Vietnam, entitles her piece “Advice for Coping with Life” It is very important to have an organized lifestyle, respect others, work conscientiously and realize that education never ends. We all need to keep learning; in my opinion, this is the most important advice that I can give.”

Contrary to the usual reaction of visitors to Boston, when Juan Herasme arrived from the Dominican Republic where drivers still use hand signals to indicate turns, he found Boston “easy to drive (in) because everyone knows the signs, and everyone usually respects the signals.”

Finally, we identify with the Haitian student, Suze Etienne, who describes her first day in Boston, at the end of November: “It was cold and snowy. I said, ‘God help me!’ The first day I put my feet down and walked it was terrible for me. I wanted to go back to Haiti.”

Students celebrate diverse cultures

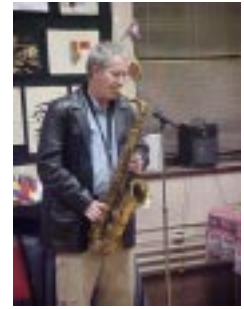
Respect for cultural diversity underlies the work at NDEC. Cultural Heritage Day gives students the opportunity to shine as they share their often unfamiliar and always colorful traditions with fellow students, staff



and friends of NDEC. This bi-annual event featured an amazing array of music, dancing, folk singing, rap, and food.

The day began with an Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony and featured a Citizenship Circle, honoring students who are new Americans, and a raising ceremony for NDEC's new United States flag. Students from many of the center's 52 countries donned beautiful costumes, presented information about their lives before coming to the United States, and demonstrated music,

dance and ceremonies from their native countries. The United States was well represented as NDEC staff member Al Fortier played jazz saxophone, demonstrating a piece of purely American culture.



An "Artifacts Room" held treasures from homelands and featured two multimedia presentations, poetry and music spotlighting the countries and regions of NDEC students.



Students from different programs mingled and made new friends, while staff and tutors became the students, learning about the culture and art of so many wonderful places. The day program culminated in a conga line led by NDEC's new Academic Diploma Program coordinator, Frances LaRoche.

Notre Dame AmeriCorps: Going Strong in South Boston

This year NDEC has four Notre Dame AmeriCorps volunteers who again bring a special light and energy to Notre Dame Education Center. Bill Hanna, Carrie Kotecki, Lyndsey Frushour and Chris Hall (from left, photo at left) share in teaching and event planning and bring fresh ideas from campuses and communities all across the United States.

A graduate of Lawrence University in Wisconsin, Bill joined the NDEC family because of his belief that an educated populace can better help this country overcome its many problems. Bill comments that: "NDEC is a place where all people are accepted openly, without judgment, and are always treated with respect."

Carrie hails from Milwaukee but has spent most of the last decade in Texas where she graduated from St. Mary's University. Her desire to volunteer in a program placing emphasis on community and spirituality along with service led her to NDEC. Carrie finds that she loves to teach, and also that she is invigorated and inspired by the diversity of the students at NDEC.



Lyndsey came to NDEC from Indiana University and found that her expectations of NDEC and Boston were right on target, "I am growing as a person, and learning about our society, and I couldn't think of anything more worthwhile to be doing."

A native of Alabama, Chris graduated from the University of Alabama and decided on Notre Dame AmeriCorps because it met his combined goal of traveling and doing service work. Chris is also engaged by the diversity of the students at NDEC. "I enjoy learning about the students from the countries they come from and the areas around Boston as well. Working at NDEC is a great working experience!"



A message from NDEC Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I had hoped in this letter to announce the location of NDEC's new home. While the sale of the property at 50 West Broadway is progressing satisfactorily, our efforts to find a new location in South Boston have not yet produced a solution. We are fortunate that Mayor Thomas M. Menino is supporting our search for a suitable site in South Boston.

As you know, the decision to sell this property was wrenching, and came only after lengthy soul searching. In the face of an ongoing structural deficit, an annual burden of about \$200,000 due to loss of rental income, the Board of Directors reluctantly concluded that the best hope of sustaining NDEC was to use proceeds of a property sale to purchase a new site and form an endowment. An NDEC endowment fund is critical to offsetting revenue shortfalls and assuring future solvency.

The preservation of the center, consistent with our mission and the legacy of the Sisters of Notre Dame who have served this community for 146 years, continues to be the guiding force in our decision making.

Despite this somewhat unsettling situation, the center continues to operate at maximum effort. This year 439 students representing 52 countries are enrolled. Forty volunteers tutor 48 students who range in age from 16 to 78. Waiting lists for ESOL and Literacy courses alone amount to 400 adult learners that we hope to accommodate in the future. Achieving fiscal stability will protect and preserve current programs and allow us to serve more students.

We are grateful to our many friends who have been so supportive of this "Place of Hope" during these uncertain times.

Anne M. Metrick

Board of Directors 2005-2006

*Deacon James V. Kerrigan Chair
Ted Daiber*

*Seymour Danberg
Eleanor Daniels CSJ
Karen Hokanson SND
Richard T. Horan Sr.
Esther MacCarthy, SND
Marie McDonald SND
Martin McDonough
Anne M. Metrick (ex officio)
Elizabeth Michaels SND
Henry J. Mulhern
Paul Mustone
Patricia O'Brien SND
Mary Ryan SND
Jesus Salgado
Charles R. Shediak
Paul Solano
Janice Waters SND*

One of many success stories, Recent graduate sends good news



*R. William Westmoreland (GED '04) and
Raymond Knight (GED '05, Speaker)*

A recent graduate, William Westmoreland is an example of NDEC's many success stories.

Homeless and newly sober when he arrived, William attended GED (General Educational Development) classes and scored high on the GED exam. A "techie" who loves the inner working of computers, William was subsequently chosen for a ten-month computer training program.

Recently he wrote that he has a new apartment, a new job and a "nice young lady". At NDEC, William gained the tools he needed to move ahead with his life.

NDEC Mission Statement

Notre Dame Education Center's mission is to provide a community-based, comprehensive adult learning and literacy program for low-income adults through the provision of a variety of education programs underscored by the values of respect, understanding and quality service

*Contributors to this issue: Kathi Heffernan, Editor
Johanna Jacobson, Anne M. Metrick, Mary Mulligan SND
Photos: Maureen McLaughlin, SND, Jon Julie Sullivan, SND*

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

Non Profit Org
US Postage PAID
Boston, MA
Permit # 56830

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

“A Place of Hope”

***Every Future Is
Built on
EDUCATION***



ADP Graduates seated L to R: Arlene Robinson, Erin Sawyer, Leslie Harper, Courtney Casey, William Fitzmaurice Standing L to R: Phillip Hashey, ADP Counselor, Julian Mitchell, William Grout, Brian Bartholomew, Paul Mikshenas, Kevin Higgins, Stanley Greeley, Patrick Walsh, Patrick Wright, Kate Finkenstaedt, Program Coordinator Not pictured: Kevin T. Alessandro, Edward Kristopher, Silva Vagner, Chris Hristopoulos, Charles Keating, Dhilsia Osorio, Karleita Pompey



GED Graduates seated L to R: Willmore C. Dixon, Kaya Rava, Nana Kamuanga, Susannah Cloherty, Edward D. Woods Standing L to R: Amie Cressman, GED teacher, Jean Lormine, Matthew King, Raymond Knight, Sr. Mary Mulligan, SND, Literacy Coordinator Not pictured: Marie V. Dorcius, Jing H. Zhang

***Give the Gift
of
HOPE***