

## NDEC partners with South Boston en Acción

Notre Dame Education Center and South Boston en Acción are teaming up this fall to offer English classes to the community. The classes are meeting at SBEA on Logan Way in South Boston.

“SBEA identified a need for their clients to have English language instruction, and they also wanted a way to help people improve their conversation skills,” explains NDEC Program Director Manny Reynoso. “They provided the space, and we provided the instructors.”

Mayra Diaz, SBEA Program Coordinator added, “SBEA is neighborhood-based and member-driven. As a graduate of NDEC, I knew that partnering with them would give our clients a high-quality program that would boost their confidence in their English language skills.” (*Learn more about Mayra’s NDEC journey on page 2.*)



*The ESOL Learning Circle at South Boston en Acción is off to a great start. Learning circles (LC) are peer-led, teacher-facilitated, peer-to-peer groups designed for ten or fewer students. NDEC is a pioneer in using the concept to aid students in improving both their language and social skills. The group was facilitated by NDEC Program Director Manny Reynoso (center).*

## Seniors learning computer basics at Castle Cove



*Residents of Castle Cove Apartments are learning how to use computers thanks to NDEC’s partnership with Tech Goes Home.*

Residents at the Castle Cove Apartments in South Boston recently learned computer basics courtesy of Tech Goes Home and NDEC. At the end of the course, students had the option of buying a Google Chromebook laptop for only \$50.

Nathan Hoffman, NDEC’s Workforce and Partnership Manager, taught the class. The opportunity to hold the class came up several months ago, when he called Keyshia Carrington, a graduate of NDEC’s Office Skills and Technology course, to check in with her. Keyshia, Castle Cove’s wellness nurse, told Nathan about the need she saw in the residents.

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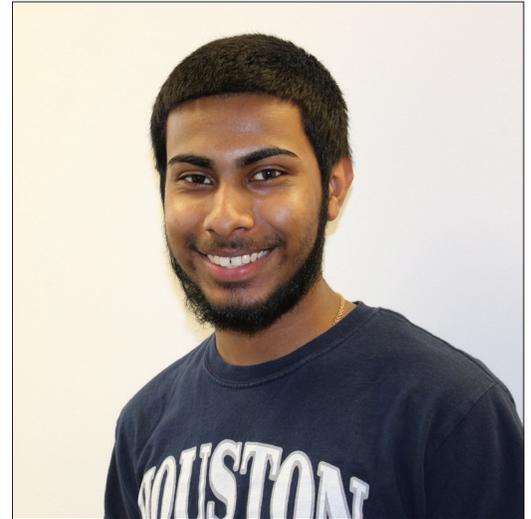
## Small classes, individual attention make a ‘big difference’ for Dave Buchan

In barely one year, Dave Buchan went from struggling in high school to being accepted at four local colleges. What made the difference? NDEC.

Dave enrolled at the Center last January. “I’d always been a good student, but the learning environment and especially the large class sizes at my old high school were just not for me,” he says. “I was keeping up with the work, but it was a challenge.”

The small classes and individual attention he received from his teachers at NDEC brought out the best in him. “Dave became a remarkably conscientious student and emerged as a classroom leader,” recalls Adam Berndt, YES/AES Program Specialist. “He matured academically and is dedicated to learning.”

Eventually, Dave triumphed as he was accepted to Curry College, Framingham State University, Lasell College, and Wentworth Institute of Technology. The first-generation college student chose to attend Wentworth, where he is pursuing a degree in architecture and interior design.



*Dave Buchan, a graduate of NDEC’s High School Diploma Program, is now attending Wentworth Institute.*

## ‘Stay focused on your goals,’ Mayra Diaz says



*NDEC student Mayra Diaz, far right, with her family. Mayra says she moved to Boston to provide a better life for all of them.*

As far as Mayra Diaz is concerned, it’s all about opportunity. “I moved to Boston [from Puerto Rico] because of my husband’s job and to give my two kids a better educational opportunity,” she explains. “Then when we got here, I realized I needed more education myself.”

Mayra enrolled at NDEC for the Fall 2017 semester. Classes were challenging, she admits, but the desire to succeed and create a better life for herself and her family has been a powerful motivator. “You’ve

got to be focused on your goals and work hard for them,” she says. “Find the opportunities and put in the effort.”

“I’ve increased my knowledge in mathematics and learned about different cultures, among other things,” she continues. “I can also express my ideas better. I still have a lot to learn, but I’m much more comfortable now.”

Mayra graduated in 2018 and is now Program Coordinator for South Boston en Accion, a neighborhood-based, member-driven organization that builds community and leadership among Latino families. SBEA is partnering with NDEC to offer English classes this fall.

“At NDEC, I learned to have empathy for people, to listen, and to respect them,” Mayra says. “I use those qualities in my work every day.”

“NDEC is a great opportunity,” she concludes. “It’s more than a school—it’s a great and wonderful family where you’re encouraged to grow personally and professionally.”

# Summer of Learning @NDEC

The beat goes on @NDEC! Thanks to our community partners, the Center was able to conduct classes at various locations around South Boston during the summer. We're grateful to them for their support.



*The Summer 2019 ESOL Learning Circle: Conversation participants enjoyed a summer of learning and sharing @ Tierney Learning Center.*



*Summertime and the studies continue for students in the Adult HiSET Program @ Catholic Charities Laboure Center.*



*NDEC's Youth Education Services provided High School Diploma Program and High School Equivalency (HiSET/GED) courses for youth ages 16-22 @ Catholic Charities Laboure Center.*



*Students in the employability workshops that met @ South Boston Public Library listen intently.*

## Seniors learning computer basics at Castle Cove

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Students learned computer vocabulary, mouse and keyboard exercises, and setting up Gmail accounts (Chromebooks run on Google's operating system). Future classes, Nathan says, will cover topics that are of special interest to senior citizens. "Further down the line, we'll focus on using technology to promote healthy, independent living. The plan is to teach seniors how to access these online resources and incorporate them into their lives."

Founded in 2000, Tech Goes Home helps bring computers, Internet, and training to those without so students can do homework, adults can find jobs, and seniors can connect with loved ones.

For more information about NDEC's partnership with Tech Goes Home and future class sessions, contact Nathan Hoffman, [nhoffman@ndecboston.org](mailto:nhoffman@ndecboston.org).



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## Learning Circles gather at Boston Public Library

Peer to Peer University (P2PU) met at the Boston Public Library to hold its annual meeting. The gathering was an opportunity for educators, librarians, and organizers to meet, share best practices, and network for the future.

Learning circles (LC) are peer-led, teacher-facilitated, peer-to-peer groups designed for ten or fewer students. Groups meet weekly, often at a local library. The model includes technology and group support. NDEC is a pioneer in using the concept to aid students in improving both their language and social skills.



*NDEC has adapted Peer to Peer University's Learning Circles concept to teach both language and social skills. (Photo collage courtesy of P2PU)*



*Red the Bear is a key member of NDEC's Learning Circle.*

Currently, a Learning Circle for ESOL students is meeting at the offices of South Boston en Acción. NDEC offers weekly, face-to-face, facilitated LC meetings that also includes online learning—the technology component. NDEC conducted one Learning Circle meeting this summer, and will offer two more in the fall.

Because sharing is such an important part of the LC model, NDEC facilitators use an item to

serve as a “talking stick.” Once a person is holding the item, no one is permitted to interrupt her or him. Manny Reynoso, NDEC’s Program Director, co-facilitates with a teddy bear named Red.

“Red makes it easy for people to open up and talk,” says Manny. “He’s friendly and non-threatening, and that is the essence of Learning Circles—creating a welcoming place where people can learn.”