

STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROFILES



AJEEN BALATA, a native of Kurdistan, is enrolled in the Adult Education Services College and Career Pathways ESOL class. Ajeen says, “NDEC changed my life. I am able to go to my son’s school and talk to his teachers both verbally and through text messages. I can also go shopping and communicate with others. I have a new voice—in English!”

Ajeen had been an elementary school teacher in Kurdistan, so she has a deep appreciation for her teachers. “NDEC’s teachers are very nice and helpful,” she says. “I am so much more confident now. I still have a long way to go but I can look back and see how far I’ve come.”

SEIPEL HUSSEIN, who is from Iraq, came to NDEC so she could learn English. “My 5-year-old son speaks English, and I wanted to communicate better with him,” she says. “NDEC has allowed me to become more comfortable with the English language. I also understand more than when I first started the program.”

Seipel is currently enrolled in NDEC’s Adult Education Services College and Career Pathways ESOL class. Her goal is to earn an American college degree in nursing. “I am also trying to learn more about American culture,” she says. “I believe it is important to know about the different cultures in the world.”



CLAUDIA LIMA was born in Cape Verde and grew up in Portugal. Married and the mother of two daughters, Claudia is enrolled in Adult Education Services, College and Career Pathways Adult Secondary Education. “I was tired of working at jobs that had no future,” she says. “I realized that I needed to make changes in my education no matter what and I said, ‘The time is now.’”

“Being a student at NDEC gives me hope for my future,” says Claudia. “The teachers work really hard to help the students achieve their goals.”



NYOKA MCGANN is originally from Kingston, Jamaica. She came to the United States about 13 years ago and is enrolled in Youth Education Services, High School Equivalency certification. “When I am finished here, I want to work with City Year, attend Roxbury Community College, and major in Early Childhood Education and Social Work,” says Nyoka. “In the future, I hope to be a family counselor working with children who have problems in their household. You’ll never get anywhere in life if you are too afraid to try.

“I am grateful for every opportunity the staff at NDEC helped me to get and for helping me to get on a straight path to my future,” she says. “It feels really great to know you have a lot of support.”

MARC ORISMA, a native of Haiti, is studying math and English in Adult Education Services, College and Career Pathways, Adult Secondary Education. He came to NDEC to improve his level of education. What he didn’t realize was that NDEC would change his life.

“Learning about computers, meeting with people from different cultures, learning the right way to handle certain life situations—that is a big change for me,” he says. “My career goals are to learn more about business and to improve my computer skills. NDEC has prepared me for that.”



MARIBEL RODRIQUEZ is a native of Puerto Rico and is currently attending NDEC’s Adult Education Services, Literacy and Academic Achievement, Adult Basic Education. “I took the GED test, but I didn’t pass, and that was discouraging to me,” she says. “Later, I heard my daughter talking with a friend who told her about NDEC. I enrolled at NDEC and started studying English. With the help of my teacher, I graduated from Level 4 of ESOL. I am now preparing to take the HiSET exam.”

When she completes her studies, Maribel hopes to become a counselor. “NDEC is a good place for adults to learn,” she says. “I recommend it to everybody.”

OLGA ZUNIGA is from Honduras. She wants to take advantage of “all the good opportunities NDEC has given me” so that she can help others. Since coming to the Center, Olga has learned to use a computer and has taken classes in Medical Terminology. She is enrolled in Adult Education Services, College and Career Pathways ESOL.

“NDEC has helped me prepare for success in many different ways,” she says. “I like NDEC because we work hand in hand. The teacher builds your confidence so you can express yourself freely in class. One day I hope to earn my high school diploma and attend college.”

