



Sharing Language--Building Community

## Spring Thoughts

**Valued.** At Thrive, we want to communicate and promote the idea that each person is valued.

We want our students and those who come to our activities to know that they are valued regardless of

- ...where they come from
- ... what their backgrounds are
- ...what their religion is
- ... what language they speak
- ...how long they plan to be here

Additionally, we value the diversity and creativity found in other cultures and languages, and we value those who are willing to share their skills to teach and learn these.



ESL student & board member cooking for Multi-cultural Holiday Celebration

At the community of people at Thrive, we are glad to be able to invite others in as valued members, and we appreciate the unique presence each person brings. We also hope to help them find places to belong in the larger Williamsport community.

Further, we value our teachers, tutors, volunteers, and board members for sharing their time, talent, and just themselves. Last, but certainly not least, we value the people who pray for us, encourage us, and donate to keep Thrive operating & City Alliance Church who opens their doors to us.



Beginning ESL Class

The Bible also shares the idea of God valuing all people regardless of where they are from, and this is important to many of those who help at Thrive. The following are a few passages that come to mind:

**Genesis 1:27a** ~ "God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them."

*There are no limits. God made each person. Each person is valuable.*

**Leviticus 19:33-34** ~ "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God."

*Wow! God set a clear expectation for how he wanted his people to treat people from other places and why.*

**Luke 10:30-37** ~ *The Parable of the Good Samaritan.* In Jewish culture at the time of Jesus's parable, Samaritans were looked down on by many Jews as outsiders. However, Jesus used a Samaritan in his parable to illustrate an example of a good neighbor. In **Luke 17:11-19**, Jesus also points out that the leper who came back to thank him for healing was a Samaritan.

**Matthew 8:5-11** tells the story of Jesus healing a centurion's servant. Verse 11 says, "When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, 'Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Issac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.'"

*At the time when this happened, many Jewish people felt the Romans and their forces like centurions were intruders in their land. However, Jesus was willing to help and even praised a Roman centurion and reminded the audience of his vision for the those far away.*



High School Spanish 3 Class

We are thankful that God values everyone. Please join us in praying and looking for ways each day to show that we value those around us.

## ESL Classes

- ❖ Mondays & Thursdays
- ❖ 7:30-9:00pm
- ❖ Beginning & intermediate level classes

## Adult Spanish Classes

Thrive is blessed by the recent requests we've had to re-open our adult Spanish classes. We would like to be able to help equip community members to interact in this way and are working on plans. If you are interested and would like to be notified when a new beginning and/or intermediate Spanish class for high school students and adults may be starting, please email us.

## Immigration Legal Services Provider?

Over the years, at Thrive we've encountered several people from other countries in need of legal services related to their immigration status. Some delay or don't get help because they don't know where to go or they don't understand their options. For others, lawyers or other non-profits are too far away or too expensive. Sometimes, people don't know who to trust or don't know that they may have options.

To help meet some of these needs, Thrive is excited to have recently received approval to move forward as a CLINIC affiliate (Catholic Legal Immigration Network). This would allow us to provide much needed basic legal immigration services in our region.

If we proceed & receive accreditation, Thrive volunteers could assist immigrants to navigate parts of the immigration system by helping with applications like those for green cards (I-130), citizenship (N-400 & N-600), and DACA. They could also assist those without current documentation to assess if they may have options and help connect them with reputable immigration lawyers for other services or help them consider contingency plans for their families in case of deportation.

Before taking the **next** step, we are working to make sure that we have volunteers & funding in place to diligently carry out such services for the long term. To make this program a reality, we need a few committed volunteers for shifts of 2-4 hours a week and \$4,500 to help with start up costs. If this is something that you feel called to help with, please contact us at 570-337-2898.

## People Spotlight

Watch for information about other students, staff, & volunteers in future

**Isabel** is originally from Mexico City. This month she will have been here for exactly two years. She came because her husband is from Williamsport. It is difficult because she is not used to the cool weather and does not have her extended family here, but she likes the area because it is quiet. She thinks ESL classes are good because she can socialize with people. Her hobbies are to listen to music and spend time with her baby.

*Interview by Gamaliel*

**Gamaliel** is from Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico. He has been here in Pennsylvania for ten years and has been in the U.S. for about 14 years. He came to the area because his job sent him to Lock Haven. English is difficult for him when he has to read or write, but he thinks classes are really good and help a lot. He likes the weather and the mountains in the area. His hobbies are riding four wheelers, shooting targets, and hunting.

*Interview by Isabel*

**Mauro** is from Mexico. He has been here for 1 year and 2 months. He is here on business and works for a petroleum company. He thinks the food and the language are difficult here, but he likes the security because it is a safer place than Mexico. He likes ESL classes because the teachers love to teach foreigners and they don't treat Americans and foreigners differently. His hobbies are to know history from other countries because he reads a lot of articles and the internet.

*Interview by Gustavo*

**Gustavo** is from Brazil. He has been here for one and a half months. He came on business and is working for a local cable company. The English language is difficult because a lot of people speak so fast and that makes him confused sometimes. However, he likes that it is a quiet area with security here. He thinks the English classes are a good opportunity for foreign people. His hobby is old car restoration.

*Interview by Mauro*



Intermediate ESL Class



## Giving Opportunity

Thrive is participating in this year's Raise the Region event on March 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>. It is a community-wide effort to raise funds & awareness for local non-profits. It includes potential prizes for organizations and stretching dollars from the event sponsor. It is a great opportunity to partner with Thrive. From 6pm on Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> until midnight on March 10<sup>th</sup>, you can go to <https://www.raisetheregion.org/#npo/thrive-international-programs> to donate to Thrive. Please voice your support and join us by giving during the event!

## Calling All Artists

Thrive is seeking to draw attention to the idea that everyone is valued regardless of their background, immigration status, language, etc. One way we are doing this is through a t-shirt contest. We are seeking designs that express the theme of "valued". It is a great way to share your artistic talent & help Thrive. Submissions are due by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Go to [www.thriveip.org](http://www.thriveip.org) for more details. Also, watch for upcoming voting on our Facebook page and a chance to purchase a shirt with the winning design.



## Ways to Get Involved

**Volunteer**--Thrive is thankful for the help of many volunteers, and we often hear how they feel blessed in return by their interactions at Thrive. Prayerfully consider joining us for one shift per week or more. We are looking for volunteers for the following positions: **Nursery helpers** (age 14 and older--Mon./Thurs. evenings from 7:30-9:00pm), **ESL classroom assistants & tutors** (Mon./Thurs. evenings from 7:30 to 9:00pm), **drivers to pick up ESL students** (Mon./Thurs. evenings approximately 6:45 to 7:30pm), and **potential legal program volunteers** (times TBA). We are glad to provide training to help our volunteers strengthen their skills as they help others. State-mandated clearances are required.



**Churches**--As a Christian organization, Thrive aims to connect with local churches who are interested in partnering with us through praying for us, welcoming those from other countries, and helping financially. If your church would be interested in having a staff member share as a speaking engagement or just one-on-one, please feel free to contact us.

**Donate**--Thrive offers services at rates that are below our actual costs and offers other services for free. We welcome donations of any size to help us meet our operating expenses like teacher salaries, books for low-income students, and food for our monthly gatherings. We were approved last year as a 501(3)(c) organization, so donations to Thrive are tax deductible. Beyond that, each donation helps you to partner with us in our mission. Donations can be made online at our website or sent to our address on the bottom of the page.

**Facebook**--Like us at [facebook.com/thriveip](https://facebook.com/thriveip) to follow some of our activities.

### Our Mission Statement

1. To welcome international people living in our community with an attitude of mutual respect and inclusion
2. To share God's love through educational, social, and spiritual opportunities that encourage connection with others, realization of goals, and the ability to thrive in new contexts
3. To equip teachers, volunteers, and community members with skills to help them serve in similar ways locally or around the world