



# Thrive International Programs

October 2014

CONNECT ~ LEARN ~ GROW

## Fall Updates

This fall has been bursting with activity at Thrive. We are so blessed by the community of people who attend and who gather to plan, pray for, and carry out the different parts of our programs. It is exciting to think of how the results might be used later.



Our ESL (English as a Second Language) classes continue on Mondays and Wednesdays. There is a beginning level class in the mornings and an intermediate level class in the evenings along with small group tutoring. We've recently welcomed new students from Guatemala and Thailand, and have been privileged to have some old students return. It is amazing to look back to a year ago and see how far some of the students have come in terms of both their language and the steps they've taken towards their family, career, and academic goals.

Our high school/adult Spanish classes have also continued on Tuesdays nights. There

are faithful students who have been working on their language for months, and others who have just started in either the low-beginning or high-beginning classes. It is exciting to witness some of them using their new skills with others in our community.

The biggest change recently, however, has been the addition of more youth foreign language classes. Our first Chinese classes got off the ground in September. There is one class for elementary school students and another for middle/high school students. A persistent group of high school students have also pushed ahead and started Spanish 2 this fall. Springing up organically from simultaneous awareness of a need and volunteers to meet the need, there has also been a small group of high school ESL students gathering for tutoring for their school subjects once a week.



For more casual opportunities, our multi-language Bible study has been glad to

welcome some new faces even if they are just passing through the area briefly, and we have been working through the book of Ephesians and finally have some long awaited songs in French and almost in Chinese in our rotation.

Our monthly international student social activities started out in September with a beautiful hike to the Haystacks at Loyalsock Creek. The day was filled with fall beauty, pleasant conversation, a few bandages, and some changes into dry clothes. All ended well, though! In October, we open up for students to express their creativity through pumpkin carving.



Since many participants don't always have opportunities to meet face to face, please read on in our first newsletter to find out more about a few people who participate in Thrive. Watch for more in later newsletters.

GET TO KNOW A FEW OF OUR STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS, & STAFF...MORE TO COME IN FUTURE ISSUES

# People Spotlight



**Martiza** came to Thrive as an ESL student when she arrived from El Salvador. Since last year, she has filled multiple roles as an ESL student, an assistant/substitute in our Spanish classes, and an interpreter for high school tutoring. She is patient, reliable, encouraging, and a great role model of language learning.

**Boubacar** is originally from Mali. Like Maritza, he is an example of the Thrive community both learning and helping others. This fall, Boubacar stepped up to fill an urgent need as an all around assistant with the youth classes on Monday nights. He has been a registrar, computer trouble shooter, class assistant, and encourager. He makes everyone laugh and keeps class light hearted.

**Marina** is another example of the fluidity of roles within the Thrive community. Originally from Russia, she came to Thrive inquiring about ESL. She realized that our Spanish classes would be a better option for her, though, as she continued working on Spanish as her 3<sup>rd</sup> language. She has quickly put her developing Spanish to use volunteering first as an interpreter and then as an ESL tutor for a new Spanish-speaking family. She has been instrumental in helping them connect and learn.



**Ana** came from Venezuela several years ago. After visiting, she moved here permanently to be with her husband. She became a citizen and owned a restaurant for a while. She was a professional accountant and computer instructor in Venezuela. She studies in the ESL classes to improve her English to help her work toward re-entering the professional workforce. She has also taken on the responsibility of helping with Thrive's accounting. You may see her using English or Spanish as needed to give our students extra practice as she handles monthly payments.

**Frank** originally contacted Thrive to participate in our monthly social activities. He had no idea what he was signing up for! He joined our ESL classes to refine his pronunciation and has been a substitute ESL tutor and an all around volunteer to assist in class and help other students get to class. In Sept. he started to use his background growing up in China and his extensive academic experience to become a Chinese teacher for the middle/high school students.

**Lauren** has been studying Spanish since high school. She is studying it in the Tuesday evening adult Spanish classes now because she has always wanted to learn a second language and would like to travel to Spain. She is using her developing Spanish to help other students who have Spanish as their first language learn to speak English. She says the thing she likes the most about Spanish classes is that they are fun.

--by Sharon

**Melia** started with Thrive's predecessor organization by helping care for children in the nursery. Now she is studying Spanish in the middle/high school class to meet a foreign language requirement. Even if it is just a little right now, she uses the Spanish she is learning to help Jody communicate with Spanish speaking students in a pinch and to talk with a newly arrived Spanish-speaking teenager from Central America who attends her youth group. She likes Yoly's fun games in class the best.

## WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE?

- "Watch movies."--Hussain
- "Listen to music."--Ahmed
- "Read newspapers."--Hassan
- "Use the language and practice. Don't just memorize."--Mohaned
- "Just read. Even looking at the words if you're not really familiar with them yet will help you know their structure and let you be familiar with them next time."--Ali
- "Practice with a native speaker who will correct your spelling, pronunciation & grammar."--Adnan

**Lasham** is from Burma. He came in 2009, so he has had a long time here. He comes to class to learn English. He likes the ESL program. He is an amazing sushi chef and works at a local grocery store. He wants to speak English completely and often picks up other students for class or cheers everyone up with his sense of humor.

---by Maritza



# Benefit Dinner Teaser

So far, a menu is planned that will feature food and drinks from Saudi Arabia, China, El Salvador, Guatemala, Burma, and Mali. We're also looking forward to some art work from the students in the Chinese & Spanish classes, a brief language lesson in saying "hello" and "thank you", a Chinese character writing competition, musical pieces from Burma and Russia, and a cultural trivia game.

The fall benefit dinner will be held on Saturday, Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00pm at the church. In addition to just being a fun night out, the dinners are a chance to showcase the varied talents of our students, volunteers, and staff. They also raise public awareness of the benefits of cross cultural experiences and funds for Thrive's operations.

Guests pay at the door, but reservations are required and can be made by calling 570-337-2898 or emailing [staff@thriveip.org](mailto:staff@thriveip.org). The cost is \$10 for adults, \$6 for children 8 years old and younger, free for children 2 years old and younger.



## Volunteer Opportunities

Thrive is blessed by the help of many volunteers, and we often hear how they feel blessed by their interactions at Thrive. If you are interested in joining our volunteer team, we are looking for people to step in to meet the following needs. Feel free to prayerfully consider joining us even for just one shift per week.

- **ESL classroom assistants**-- Classroom assistants help as needed in class or with tutoring small groups on Mondays & Wednesdays from 8:45-10:15am and from 7:30-9:00pm. We're glad to help train interested volunteers; no experience is necessary.
- **Drivers**--Several of our ESL students don't drive, and there is no good bus route connecting their homes and the church in the evening. We have a need for a volunteer(s) to pick up students in the Williamsport area and bring them to class on Monday and Wednesday evenings by 7:30pm. It is a great opportunity to help them practice a little casual conversation and offer encouragement along the way.
- **Construction team**--Join us in January to help with remodeling and re-painting in the church basement where we hold most of our classes.

### 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

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."

*Questions, Comments, Suggestions? Interested in other ways to support our organization? Feel free to contact us!*

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