



Sharing Language--Building Community

Fall Thoughts

Perhaps over the last year, newsletters have been more of a yearly function... It has been an exciting year, though, and it is a privilege to look back on the blessings of the year and look forward with anticipation to opportunities ahead.



The community of people God has put together at Thrive is one of our biggest blessings. Welcoming new students, giving rides to and from class, sharing ideas about where to find apartments or how to write resumes, helping each other with class tasks...examples are everywhere. The sense of community also comes up in the fluid nature of people's roles at Thrive. It can be hard to keep track of whether someone is a teacher, volunteer, student, or board member because many of our people serve and participate in multiple ways. We have had students from the Spanish classes and international college students who tutor, interpret for ESL students, and help with youth classes; current and former ESL students (and

their children) who teach, volunteer, and come as guests in our foreign language classes; and teachers and volunteers who invest their time studying other languages and coming on their days off. It is especially a privilege to hear comments when students from different classes, colleges, or countries look for one another at events. We're also grateful for the countless times people step up to help without being asked and when students say that they love class not only for the skills they learn, but also for the chance to be with each other.

In very tangible ways, the sense of community was also clear this past year at our fall benefit dinner & spring coffee house when so many hands quickly worked to pull everything together; the international student Thanksgiving when everyone relaxed and enjoyed new and old holiday traditions; the Christmas party when we were blessed to celebrate with almost twice as many participants as expected; our Chinese New Year celebration with lots of help from current and new teachers, students, and volunteers; the beginning of our summer youth programs with a whole team of staff and volunteers eager to help; and our summer picnic with a relaxing time by participants from our various programs. Most recently, it has been exciting to see the warmth and eagerness shared by the ESL and Adult Spanish classes as they started having break & conversation opportunities together in English & Spanish.



These kinds of experiences bring to life the challenge in Matthew 22:39 to "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" and a quote on our website by Smith and Carvill (2000) from *The Gift of the Stranger*: "We propose that foreign language education prepares students for two related callings: to be a blessing as strangers in a foreign land, and to be hospitable to strangers in their own homeland." We are truly blessed by the community God has put together at Thrive.



As you enter the fall, challenge yourself to dream a little about how you can be a blessing to others by using another language (English or a foreign language) and/or offering hospitality to those around you.



High School & Adult Spanish Classes

- ❖ **Intermediate Spanish** - Mondays 7:00-8:30pm (*new students accepted on an ongoing basis depending on their level*)

Fall 2015 Youth Classes

Registration now open for

- ❖ **Spanish 1** - 2nd to 5th grade
- ❖ **French 1** - 6th to 12th grade
- ❖ **Mandarin 2** - 3rd to 9th grade
- ❖ **Spanish 3** - 6th to 12th grade

*Classes start Sept. 17th

ESL Classes

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

Multi-language Bible Study

- ❖ Sundays at 7:00pm @ the Lantz home
- ❖ Potluck dinner, songs in different languages & Bible study
- ❖ We're currently reading through the book of 1 John together.

People Spotlight

Meet some of our community . ~ More to come in future issues.

Mayda vivia en Puerto Rico. Ahora ella vive en el YWCA in Williamsport. Ella tiene un hijo y una hija en Puerto Rico. Ella tiene dos hermanos. En Puerto Rico, ella trabajaba como guardia. Aqui, ella le gusta estudiar e ir a la iglesia.

Mayda lived in Puerto Rico. Now she lives at the YWCA in Williamsport. She has one son and one daughter in Puerto Rico. She has two brothers. In Puerto Rico, she worked as a guard. Here, she likes to study and go to church.

--Interview & article by Melia Lantz, Middle/High School Spanish 2 Summer Class

Maricela es de México, y vive en los Estados Unidos por un año-tres años (no lo sabe). Ella le gusta los Estados Unidos. Ella tiene dos hijos, Mauro y Marvicio, y ellos tienen ocho años y dos años. Maricela tiene veintinueve años. Para divertirse, ella le gusta caminar, ir a la iglesia y escuchar musica.

Maricela is from Mexico and is going to live in the United States for one to three years (she's not sure). She likes the United States. She has two sons, Mauro and Marvicio, and they are eight and two years old. Maricela is twenty-nine years old. For fun, she likes walking, going to church and listening to music.

--Interview & article by Juliana Rhinehart, Middle/High School Spanish 2 Summer Class

An email from **Mallorie**, a student in the intermediate Spanish class:

"I was so excited today. My boss asked for me to call the customer in Mexico we had given up on, and I understood the whole automated system, got a hold of someone, relayed information to them and got a hold of the customer! My boss was very impressed. I felt great about it! I think listening to people speaking Spanish has helped a lot, making my mind switch to Spanish. Thank you! I'm excited to be there Monday!"



"Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:39



New Location

At Thrive, we are amazingly grateful for the space, encouragement, volunteering, participation, and financial support that Calvary Baptist Church has provided from 2011 through this summer. They helped our programs get off the ground and grow, and we hope to continue ties with the people there and the ministry of the outreach that was started there.

To have space to better meet our current needs and look forward to the future, as of Sept. 14th our programs will be moving to City Alliance Church (in the former First Baptist Church building) at the corner of Elmira and 4th Streets. We are looking forward to getting to know everyone there, and greatly appreciate their willingness to have us.

Ways to get involved

Volunteer--Thrive is grateful 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), **ESL classroom assistants & tutors** (Mon./Thurs. evenings from 7:30 to 9:00pm), and **drivers to pick up ESL students** (Mon./Thurs. evenings approximately 6:45 to 7:30pm). We are glad to provide training to help our volunteers grow in their skills at the same time as they help others.

Help us connect--We are hoping to connect with a few **local attorneys** who may be interested in taking on a pro bono immigration case. If you are an attorney or know one who may be interested in exploring the possibility, please feel free to contact us.

Donate--In order to welcome people and provide language learning opportunities to as many students as possible, Thrive offers classes at rates that are below our actual costs and offers other services for free. Especially in this time of transition, we welcome donations of any size to help us meet our operating expenses. In the spring, we received approval 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 made out to *Thrive* and mailed to Thrive International Programs, Inc.; c/o First Baptist Church; 380 W. 4th Street; Williamsport, PA, 17701.

Facebook--Like us at [facebook.com/thriveip](https://www.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