



Sharing Language--Building Community

Fall Thoughts

The past few weeks have been a flurry of activity. Through a bit of exhaustion, we still see a thread running through our story that we have so much to be thankful for.



This has especially been true since Thrive received recognition from the Department of Justice in September to offer immigration legal services for low-income & vulnerable community members. We are grateful that years of service with immigrants in our community & the conviction that all people deserve justice & dignity brought us here.

Many times, we drove students to Scranton, Lancaster, or Philadelphia to try to get immigration services. Often the arrangements are complicated & private attorney fees may stop or delay some from getting help. For Thrive, the turning point happened a couple years ago when we spoke to an educated, hard working new student from a country being torn apart by war & food shortages. Our hearts sank to realize his legal immigration status had recently lapsed because he didn't understand the options & didn't know how to get help. Having legal status can mean stable job opportunities, access to health care, & increased

chances to strengthen families & the community. It can also mean less daily fear for people like him & his family, who like many are a mix of citizens & non-citizens.

Though he has moved on, we are passionate about stepping into the gap to help immigrants understand their options & navigate the complex system of immigration applications. We shared our first Know Your Rights Presentation & Immigration Benefits Screening in Milton a couple weeks ago & are eager to repeat this in other communities. We also have appointments to help immigrants assess their options. When they are eligible, we help clients file applications, including for issues like permanent residency, citizenship, & removal of conditions, as well as file to reunite with family members.



Such a program doesn't easily spring into existence. We are thankful for mountains of help from many different sources. We have needed technical legal support; training; computers; special software; books; office space; advertising; wildly committed staff, volunteers, and board members; community connections; & funding. It has amazed us how the right assistance has repeatedly been there

when needed to help us serve others regardless of their immigration status, language, or nationality.



Are you also passionate about providing justice & dignity to our immigrant community members? We invite you to consider any of the following options:

- 1. Pray** for decision makers during this time of upheaval in the immigration system.
- 2. Donate.** Thrive needs to raise a minimum of \$10,000 in donations this fiscal year to provide our different services. Though that is a large number, every dollar helps us continue serving. Donations can be mailed or made at www.thriveip.org.
- 3. Refer.** Share by word of mouth, Facebook posts, etc. to let others know services are available.
- 4. Volunteer.** We are establishing a list of volunteer interpreters for different languages.
- 5. Advocate.** We hear again & again that those in positions of power don't realize the importance of our immigrant neighbors nor the number of citizens who support them. Use your voice to let our leaders know.

~ Jody Lantz, Executive Director

Thrive began offering **Spanish Classes** again this fall. We offer Spanish classes to help equip others to bridge linguistic barriers and communicate across cultures in our local community or wherever their travels take them. One of the most special parts of the classes to us is that both of our Spanish teachers, Isabel & Laura, are former ESL students at Thrive who are now able to share their talents to enrich the lives of others in our community. Spanish classes are on Thursday nights. Right now, we offer beginning Spanish for adults and high school students and a Spanish + Gym class for K-3rd graders. New students for these classes as well as intermediate Spanish for adults/high school students are welcome for Session 3 starting in February 2018.



The Language Café has been a new venture at Thrive this fall on Thursday evenings. It is a time when people can gather for casual conversation in different languages. Those who are fluent in languages like Spanish, Arabic, or French practice with those learning those languages. In return, those who are fluent in English, practice with those who are learning English as a second (or third or fourth) language. The languages available depend on who comes on any night. Jenn does a great job sharing cards with conversation prompts to help get casual conversations started. A drink from a different culture is also available to try each night. It has been a delight to see people from so many different places relaxing and enjoying the time together! The final Language Café for 2017 will be on 11/30/2017 from 6:30-7:30pm. We're looking forward to starting again on 1/11/2018. Visit our Facebook page and join the Language Café Group for updates for 2018.



Special thanks to  guests, and silent auction sponsors for the delightful & delicious *One Night in India* dinner as well as to Sema and Minesh for sharing a bit of their culture with the community!



For **International College Students**, Thrive is excited to have been able to host two activities this fall, pumpkin carving and Thanksgiving dinner, to help international students feel welcome in and part of our larger community.



In **ESL Classes**, we are privileged to serve a group of students who dig in to learn English to meet their daily needs, work, help their children, assist others, & live as an integral part of the community. It is fun to connect with new students & see progress by continuing students. We love hearing what they accomplish with navigating the community & obtaining new jobs, more stable housing, good school reports, & on. Over the past month, our teachers have also engaged in weekly professional development activities to support one another & offer the best instruction to our students. We are thankful to bless others with an educational opportunity founded on solid professional teaching principles. Classes are Monday & Wednesday mornings from 9-10:30am. New students are welcome. Childcare is available.



The following are quick comments shared by some of our ESL students:

I would like to say thank you for God because I am in the U.S.A and now I am learning English. Thank you for chuch pastor and members who are teaching English teachers.

I like it, this class. Although I was in USA many years, my English was poor. This class is helping me a lot to improve my speaking and writing. I am so glad I can study here. I am thankful.

我很喜欢这个教堂的英文班。虽然我在这里很久了，但是基础很差。这个班帮助到我学习英语。我在这里学到英文。

Teacher Carissa helps me a lot in learning the English language. In Class, We practice Writing, Reading, and Speaking. We also use the Computer to practice the language by combining words and pictures, practicing different exercises. We also practice pronunciation. We also learn about the country and some math.

Thank you Thrive for making me understand English, and I am meeting a new friend everytime. I am enjoying Thrive's activities. I like cooking. I like my teachers. They are very helpful. I love the class and I am so happy to study English.

I thank God for giving me and my family a healthy life. I thank God for giving a beautiful and healthy daughter. And I thank you for giving to opportunity to learn English again.

Thank God for learning English and who are teaching English for me.