

Adult Learning Center News

Winter 2011

VOLUME VIII, ISSUE 1



Director's Message

Outside my window, the snow is piling up and the halls inside are quiet; a rare occurrence made possible by the storm. Usually, the halls are buzzing with activity as teachers have impromptu conversations in the copy room, students gather in the halls and catch up on the latest news and the phone rings steadily with calls from people wanting to get their GED, sign up for driver's education classes or enroll in an enrichment class. The usual bustle and business has been accented by new activity, as well.

Last week, we held several Center-wide letter writing sessions. Students from all programs and at all locations made their voices heard to state legislators in support of adult education. Each letter writer told their own story, emphasized the difference adult education has made in their life, and asked for financial support of adult education in the future.



This week saw the meeting of the first workforce development class developed by Barbara Light, our Assistant Director of Business and Community Outreach. It was an Excel I class offered to 10 staff members of Strafford County Community Action Program. Participants report that the class was informative and relevant to their work.

Five DALC teachers are getting ready to launch a new course called College Connections, which will allow 12 adult education graduates to build the necessary skills to succeed in college. They will study English, math and computers, as well as college success skills and career planning in a full day 14-week course.

In every season, the Center is a busy place. No winter hibernation here!

Deanna Strand

Come Help Us Grow! 2006-2011 \$102,647.94 raised Goal exceeded!



Memories of Helen Phipps

This year we said good-bye to the founder, driving force and inspiration of the Dover Adult Learning Center, Helen Phipps, who died at the age of 82.

Debbie Tasker, Helen's successor and now GED administrator for the State of New Hampshire offered these memories.

It's the 1970's. Picture a petite dynamo with light brown hair. She seems to be everywhere in Dover, leaping out of her VW "bug" to attend a church meeting, serving on the City Council, beaming at her children's concerts, hiring teachers for the new Adult Basic Education program, arranging with volunteers to host a pot luck dinner to honor 150 adult education students and their families, encouraging a student who doubts he can ever learn to read, speaking to service clubs to raise awareness of adult literacy, baking and decorating gingerbread Christmas cookies for the children of all her friends, raising scholarship funds to enable needy high school students to go on to college.

Or, perhaps, picture the year that Helen became the first woman chair of the Dover School Board or the year she led the Joint Building Committee to successfully complete the current Dover High School. Or the year she decided that adult education needed to be backed by a permanent non-profit organization. Or the year her family established their farm and she baked lasagna with her own home-made cottage cheese. Or the year she performed the miracle of convincing city officials to purchase an old church building as a home for the Adult Learning Center.

Maybe it's a later year when Helen is overcoming one of the many health challenges that would daunt a lesser person. Now she's walking more slowly, leaning on a cane, but she's still as enthusiastic and dynamic as ever—fierce in her determination that education should be available to all, generous in her praise and support for employees, positive in her encouragement for students.

Helen Phipps, the petite dynamo, was truly a giant among us, and we are fortunate that DALC was created by her persistence and graced by her indomitable spirit.

Red's Race For a Better Community

Sunday April 10, 2011, the Dover Adult Learning Center is excited to take part and benefit once again from this community-wide event.

And a big thank you goes out to our sponsor
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Center Stars

Fanny

Fanny wants to finish college, possibly in the United States. She has had two years of college studying business administration in her home country of Ecuador. Now she wants to complete college, but needs to be a bit more fluent in English to complete her dream.

She speaks carefully in English as she explains her situation. Fanny and her daughter, Daphne, come to the Center several times a week. Fanny studies English two mornings a week with Pam Shore and studies English with her tutor, Deb Liskow. Deb says, "I love working with her because she asks questions, and she takes notes as we talk. Luckily, there is a daycare in the morning so her 19 month- old daughter, Daphne, can come as well.

Fanny, her sister, and her father arrived in the United States in June of 2009. She has been attending classes since last January. She has been learning the history of the United States for the first time, so some day she can take citizenship classes. She also is taking mathematics, her favorite, as well as reviewing English grammar.



Fanny and Daphne



Stacy

Some day she would like to own her own company. She has had experience not only as a cashier, bilingual secretary, assistant manager, but as a model. She said that she would help display products, and they would take her photo next to the product. It is easy to see why. It is also easy to see that Fanny, with all her hard work, will realize her dream some day.

Stacy

Stacy wants to take college classes some day. She is not sure what classes she will focus in yet, but she is on her way.

For the past two years, Stacy has been faithfully showing up for GED classes to get her GED. Her friend Peri told her about the afternoon classes with Denise, then Stacy found that evening classes worked better with her schedule. So she has been studying with Kim Hanson for over a year. She already has passed one of her five tests, social studies. She says social studies is her favorite. But now that she is studying science, she is beginning to like that as well.

"She's wonderful!" says Stacy of her teacher Kim. "She makes it easy to understand," she continued. And, Kim gives her homework because Stacy asks for homework. "I usually have it done by Thursday," said Stacy. and, her boyfriend and three children, ages 10, 8, and 6 years old, are supportive.

Stacy says the kids try to help her with her homework. She is surprised sometimes when they can. But still, she has to stop them sometimes. "I've got to figure it out myself!" declared Stacy. And, she will.

Your Donations at Work: Advanced English for Speakers of Other Languages

Bill Badgley began his career as a teacher right out of graduate school but left the field to work in computers. While working at UNH he got a degree in adult education which brought him back to teaching and eventually led him to DALC, where he tutors, leads a discussion group, teaches citizenship, teaches English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) and Advanced ESOL.

Badgley's Advanced ESOL program is not grant funded, and while there is a small tuition charge, it is primarily funded by donations. This program is not constrained by the rules and test standards that define a curriculum at the lower levels, thus it gives students the chance to explore language and their world in a very exciting way.

Badgley starts every class with a series of questions like 'Is there anything you want to talk about? Have you encountered anything in the last week that you want to talk about, something you don't understand?' During the week students will actually jot down questions like why a co-worker said a particular sort of thing. Then off they'll go on a mini-lesson related to that.

Thirty minutes of the class is a discussion, like work- things that they like and don't like, religion, hope, almost any topic that adults are interested in. As they discuss, they work on pronunciation and grammar. A recent discussion topic was creationism versus evolution. They read a section of Inherit the Wind about the Scopes trial in Tennessee.

"I would say that the students revel in sharing ideas with each other. I make it a ground rule that all conversation must be respectful. In the discussion of creationism I had a minister who was very strongly on the creationism side and a group of Europeans on the evolutionary side. If I do my job correctly the tone of the class is always respectful and people are interested in what others have to say and I do tell them that it is always fair to ask why. I respect your right to say that but why? We do a lot of work in being able to articulate what one thinks but also to explain why you think that."



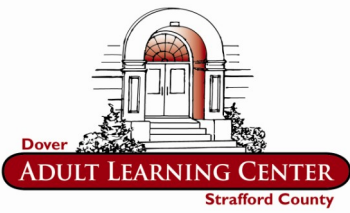
Bill Badgley and student Run Juan

Badgley observes that throughout the ESOL program a strong sense of sympathy and understanding develop. The students are all sharing the same struggle, it plays out in the showing of respect, interest in learning about others' culture and friendships develop. Sometimes the conversation continues after class at a local restaurant.

The mix of cultures does not create conflict; rather the more interesting part is that not all cultures ask students what they think. "I've had students tell me that I am the first teacher who asked them what they think. There are other countries' educational systems that are very, very teacher centric. You just take notes and the teacher knows everything."

Everybody wants to improve their English grammar, usage and increase pronunciation skills but people also come because it is their one opportunity to have intellectual discussions, to use their brains, to share their ideas. One student says that is the only reason she comes because she doesn't get an opportunity in her daily life to talk about anything important.

"Often I have these great plans for how the two hours will go but it turns out to be nothing like that, but it doesn't matter because it works" says Badgley.



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Friends of The Center Quarterly Newsletter - Winter 2011

The Dover Adult Learning Center of Strafford County helps adults in the Strafford County area enhance their life-coping skills and improve their lives through basic education, job training, high school completion and enrichment classes. We help our students become more effective lifelong learners, family members, workers and citizens.

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