



Backside News

AUGUST 2009

AUGUST EVENTS:

AUGUST 11TH— ZOO DAY - ESL CLASSES CANCELLED

AUGUST 13TH— STUDENT & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PARTY 5-7PM

AUGUST 28TH— KY STATE FAIR FIELD TRIP 11:30AM-7:30PM

UPCOMING EVENTS:

SEPTEMBER 3RD— GOODBYE PARTY FOR RACHEL & STUDENT & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PARTY 5-7PM

SEPTEMBER 4TH— RACHEL'S LAST DAY

SEPTEMBER 5TH— WORLDFEST FIELD TRIP 5:30-9:30PM

AUGUST CENTER HOURS:

MONDAY-FRIDAY
CHURCHILL
11:30AM-8PM

SUNDAY
SOCCER AT GEORGE ROGERS CLARK PARK
6PM-8PM

“The Hardest Thing About Learning English”

Written by: Melissa Johnson

Learning another language, especially if it is your second language, has a way of humbling you. All of a sudden, you are at the bottom of the totem pole, trying to figure out how to express yourself in a language you really do not understand. The English students at the Learning Center face this reality everyday, whether it is in English class or in the barns.

When asked why he decided to learn English, Arturo Garcia Perez, an intermediate English student, said, “I need it to work and to go to the store. Sometimes the American people talk to me in English and I don’t understand.”

Elías Perez, an advanced English student, said that when he came to the United States seven years ago, he could not speak any English. “I wanted to communicate with some American friends and when they talked to me, I didn’t understand,” he explained.

By learning English, Arturo and Elías have bridged the communication gap that existed when they first arrived from Guatemala. Elías is

fluent in English and Arturo, after studying English for nine months, is able to communicate effectively in English.

Although Elías is fluent in English, he admitted that people still have a hard time understanding his Eng-



Jack Cox teaches English to the Beginning English Practice Class.

lish because of his pronunciation. “We have to learn new sounds,” he explained.

There are many sounds in English that Spanish does not have and vice versa. A common mispronunciation for Spanish speakers occurs with words that start with ‘sp’. An example of this is the word ‘space’, which is ‘espacio’ in Spanish. The Spanish speakers naturally put an ‘e’ sound in front of the ‘sp’ so it sounds like ‘espace’. This is one of the many phonetic mistakes made by Spanish speakers learning English.

Gerardo Gonzalez, a beginning English student

who started learning English in May of this year, also stated that “the hardest thing about learning English is pronunciation.”

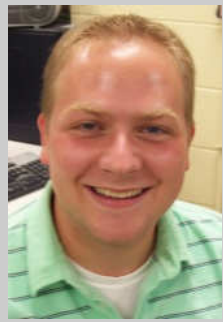
The Learning Center offers a helping hand to the students. All of the current team members and many of the volunteers have struggled with learning a second language. When the students have questions about pronunciation or do not understand, they feel comfortable asking for help.

However, the students still encounter situations when they must speak in English and are not understood. “One time I went to the pharmacy for some medications,” Elías said. “I was talking to the lady and she didn’t understand me. I felt bad. I didn’t know what to do.”

Although they are discouraged sometimes by situations such as these, the students do not throw in the towel. The English students at the Learning Center are some of the most unique individuals you will find. Instead of resting after they put in a hard day’s work in the barns, they head off to class to tackle the English language.

Student & Volunteer Recognition

Volunteer of the Month



Jonathon Brown is our Volunteer of the Month. An engineering student at the University of Louisville, Jon has taken on many roles at the Learning Center. He started last fall as a tutor, which he continued this spring, as well joining in for bilingual hour. Now, he is using his Spanish skills as our alternate computer teacher.

Golden Pencil Awards

These are given to students to recognize remarkable dedication or contribution to their classes or to the Learning Center community. Students are nominated for a Golden Pencil by their teachers, tutors, volunteers, or a team member.

Ramiro Campos- for persistence & improvement in attending English practice

Rene Osorio- for taking class over the phone until he arrived at Churchill to take it in person

Diego Zacarias- for always preparing for class by studying independently

Bayron Cardona- for excellent participation in class

Estuardo Morales- for exceptional effort and positivity in class

ESL Level Promotions: From Intermediate to Advanced

Dennis Quezada

FEATURED WISH LIST:

- Headphones for the computer lab
- Rechargeable batteries
- Soccer shoes - size 8, 8 ½, 9, 9 ½, 10 - gently used is fine
- Soccer balls
- Spanish Scrabble game
- "Word Up" game

Student of the Month

Special thanks to the Outrider's Society, the Kentucky Derby Museum's volunteer organization, for donating gift cards to give to each Student of the Month this year. Because we were not able to provide a prize in the past for Student of the Month, we are opening the Student of the Month award to all students, including students who have been recognized as Students of the Month in the past.

English Student of the Month



Gerardo Gonzalez is our Student of the Month for English. A new student this year, he just started classes this May. However, since then, he has learned a lot through his dedicated attendance and hard work. He regularly attends both English practice and English class, as well as occasionally joining us for bilingual hour.

Participation Student of the Month

Dennis Quezada is our Student of the Month for Participation. Dennis is a very familiar face around the Learning Center- he participates in art & guitar as well as tutoring & English classes, and he was certified through our Groom Elite course this June. In addition, Dennis is one of several "student volunteers", willing to give back to the Learning Center by helping in the library, decorating our bulletin board, designing a flyer for art class, helping with parties, substitute teaching in computer class, and any number of tasks.



Team Notes

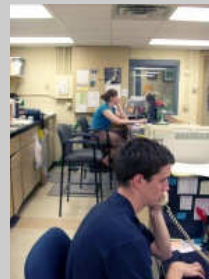
Written by: Kevin Oberhausen

Team Transformation

Here at The Learning Center we always stress among our volunteers the importance of being consistent. Unfortunately, through no fault of our own, we are guilty of breaking this golden rule. The Learning Center depends heavily upon the contributions of people in the Ameri-corps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program, but these individuals are only guaranteed to be with us for a maximum of three years.

As we transition into September, the Learning Center will reluctantly say goodbye to Rachel Brokaw, the longest ten-

ured VISTA in Learning Center history. In spite of this, the Learning Center will also be saying hello to new VISTA Emily Dingman. Because Rachel's



Rachel and Kevin working at their current desks.

workstation serves as the main greeting area for people entering the Learning Center, I will be switching desks with her before Emily's arrival so our everyday students aren't completely dis-oriented by a brand new face.

In December, the Learning Center will also be losing Ameri-corps VISTA Melissa Johnson. Due to budget cuts within the VISTA program, there will not be a new person taking over her position. For this reason, her current responsibilities will be divided up among the team.

The departures of Rachel and Melissa will change the staff dynamics of the Learning Center, but we will continue to push on serving the backstretch workers of Louisville. Please be aware that team roles and responsibilities will be changing in the coming months, and bear with us as the Learning Center adjusts to this new configuration.

Class in the Spotlight: Soccer



Written by: *Alayne Wright*

I'm not sure how long ago or whose idea it was to start the Soccer Sundays but it's been a great success. The guys know they have to come to the Backside Learning Center in some form (i.e. Computer class or just Computer time, English class, Conversation time, Guitar lessons)—anything that the Learning Center offers. This enables them to join the Soccer Sunday Gang. Then right at 6 pm we leave for a couple of hours of running, laughing and just plain fun. For those of us that just watch and cheer it is just as nice. When the first goal is made, the team that didn't score takes off their shirts and the women watching clap loudly, for the goal, of course.

I believe we all enjoy being drivers and hanging out with the soccer players very much—as everyone is just happy to be outside and watching the

fun. Most of the time the Soccer teams are all men but occasionally we have a woman, usually an American. It's very



The volunteers hanging out on the sidelines while the guys play soccer.

interesting to see the guys treat the woman like she is made of glass. No matter how many times you tell them she won't break, it's cute to see the way they dodge and weave around her when she has the ball...Perfect Gentlemen.

I think the nicest thing about Soccer Sunday is getting the guys off the

track. For one, some of them never leave the track except to go to Kroger or Wal-mart so this gives them the chance to see another part of the city and, in general, a breath of fresh air, so to speak. Some times we even stop for ice cream on the way back to the track and that perks us all up. Other times everyone just wants to head home, wherever that is. There is no question about how good the guys all sleep after an hour and a half to two hours running and kicking. These are the nicest, most polite and good-hearted guys I have ever met and I don't miss driving for Soccer Sunday very often.

Volunteers to drive students to George Rogers Clark Park for soccer on Sundays are always needed. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Rachel Brokaw at the Learning Center. This is definitely a great opportunity to build relationships with our students!

VOLUNTEER CORNER

For more information, visit the Volunteer Corner on our website!

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR
HARD WORK AND TIME!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: Contact Rachel Brokaw at the Learning Center if you are interested in volunteering.

ESL TUTOR: Provide personalized instruction, encouragement, and support to an adult English language learner. Plan lessons and work one-on-one with your student. Time commitment: Two hours a week, Mondays at 1pm.

CONVERSATION LEADER FOR BILINGUAL CONERSATION TABLES: Plan bilingual conversation prompts for multiple levels of language ability. Assist in matching conversation partners and adult ESL students. Act as a conversation partner when needed. Time commitment: one to two hours a week, Thursdays from 6-7pm.

QUILTER NEEDED: Someone has generously donated materials for a quilt. We need a talented quilter to put these materials together and make a quilt for us to sell for a fundraiser.

RECOGNITION PARTY SPONSORS: We need 2 sponsors for every party to bring drinks and party snacks for about 20 people. Parties are usually the second Thursday of the month from 5-7 PM, starting in May.

SOCCER DRIVERS: Sign up to drive students to soccer on Sundays. This is a very flexible volunteer opportunity. Talk to Jack Cox or Rachel Brokaw for more information.

KY STATE FAIR FIELD TRIP DRIVERS: When we take the students on field trips, we always need drivers to

help out. The next Learning Center field trip is to the KY State Fair. If you are interested in volunteering to drive students to the fair, contact Rachel Brokaw. You are more than welcome to join us on the trip!

**STUDENT & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PARTY:
THURS. AUGUST 13TH**

THE OUTRIDER'S SOCIETY
The Outriders Society is the volunteer organization of the Kentucky Derby Museum. Since we are a Derby Museum program, all Learning Center volunteers are eligible to join, and your volunteer hours count towards Outriders benefits. For more information, contact Julie Henry at 637-1111, x336 or online at: <http://www.derbymuseum.org/>