



Backside News

DECEMBER 2009

Learning Center Student Winter Travels

DECEMBER EVENTS:

DECEMBER 5TH-
OUTRIDER'S SOCIETY AND LEARNING CENTER HOLIDAY PARTY 10AM-12PM

DECEMBER 7TH-
MELISSA'S LAST DAY

DECEMBER 24TH-
BACKSIDE LEARNING CENTER CLOSED

DECEMBER 25TH-
BACKSIDE LEARNING CENTER CLOSED

DECEMBER CENTER HOURS:

MONDAY-FRIDAY
CHURCHILL
8:30AM-5PM

Written by: Kevin Oberhausen

Every year around early November, fewer names fill the lines on the Learning Center attendance sheets. Volunteers begin to inquire about missing students. Around the 20th, once you're down to only one José, you realize that the program has just about met its end for the year. Once December begins, the backside at Churchill Downs is essentially a ghost town. An entire community of hundreds of people seems to vanish in just a matter of weeks, but where do they all go?

Roberto Soto, who is a longtime Learning Center patron and an Assistant Trainer for Cody Autrey, was interviewed to answer these very questions. "Most horsemen go to Fairgrounds Race Course in Louisiana, another part goes to Florida, and some go to California. Every trainer has a special place they go to escape from the cold and compete in more races." When asked if any trainers remained here in Kentucky during the winter, Roberto seemed to think that "Greg Foley, Helen Pitts and Mike Maker keep a small group of horses here."

Roberto Gonzalez, who is a groom for Merrill Scherer and a frequent attendee of advanced ESL, told us of what his winters usually look like. "Before, I always went back to Mexico. Now I go to Florida every year." When

asked how winters affect his English Roberto said, "In Florida I speak more Spanish because there are so many Spanish people, but it depends on where you go."

Most Learning Center



Students from Barn 19 loading the truck to travel to Florida for the winter months

students that relocate to Florida go to either Gulfstream Park or the Palm Meadows Thoroughbred Training Center. Both locations are close to the beach and many students prefer going to Florida for this very reason. Intermediate ESL attendee Diego Zacarias said he likes Kentucky more than other places, but that Florida is his absolute favorite. When asked about what he prefers about both places Diego says, "I like Kentucky because I'm speaking English everyday. I go to the Learning Center and everyday I pick up a new word. I like Churchill Downs because I have more opportunity to learn Eng-

lish....but Florida, I like 'the place' more. I like the beach."

The trainers that do decide to stay here in the Louisville area for the winter must eventually leave Churchill Downs and migrate to the Trackside Training Facility off Poplar Level Road, High Pointe, Skylight or a local barn. Trackside is known to many students simply as 'Spectrum'. During the winter, this site is not desirable for most trainers because to compete in any races they must ship their horses long distances to other locations. Additionally, exceptionally cold winter days cause the actual surface of the racetrack to freeze. These conditions can make it impossible for horses to get in their regularly scheduled workouts. Last winter at the Trackside Training Facility there were various vacant stalls, as more trainers elected to head south to run their horses.

Most horsemen have good things to say about racing and training here in Kentucky, but also most all seem to have no problem leaving the state during the harsher winter months. Roberto Soto emphasized that, "Kentucky is the best place to work *anytime*. The problem is that there are no places to compete. Where there are places to compete, there isn't any money in the races. It is cold here yes, but the big problem is that there is no money."

Student & Volunteer Recognition



Volunteer of the Month

Jack Cox is our October Volunteer of the Month. His unwavering consistency and commitment to the Learning Center's work has always been above and beyond our expectations of a volunteer. During the month of October Jack led beginning English Practice, even adding additional unscheduled days to the class calendar. Jack led and drove students to our Sunday Bowling excursions, and also helped students with individual projects. Thank you Jack for all of your efforts!

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.

Henry Perez – persistence and attendance

Florencio Lopez – attendance

Eladio Gonzalez- participation and asking good questions

Hermeregildo Garcia – attendance and persistence in English

Martha Cruz – English improvement and attendance

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.

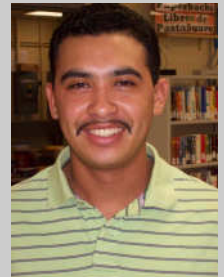
English Student of the Month



Edwin Osvaldo Rivas-Cardona is our October Student of the Month for English. Edwin began participating in the beginning English Practice in mid-September and he never looked back. During the month of October, Edwin had more attendance hours for an English service than any other student! In addition to formal class time, Edwin also participated in tutoring with Learning Center volunteer Mason Cox. Edwin's English skills have grown exponentially since beginning here at the Learning Center.

Participation Student of the Month

While many students' attendance dipped during the month of October, Edgar Cano actually increased his involvement earning October Participation Student of the Month. Edgar faithfully attended Art Class, English Practice, evening ESL, and Bowling. He also won 1st place in the pumpkin painting contest judged by our art teacher Delores Huffman at the October Halloween Party. We appreciate Edgar's many contributions to the Learning Center community.



Team Notes

Written by: Melissa Johnson

People always talk about the sacrifices they make while serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA and how you have to learn how to get by on very little. While this is very true, I really do not think that this affected my year of service in the least. Truthfully, I rarely thought about how much money I made or the "sacrifices" I had to make. That is because I worked with an extraordinary group of people whose sacrifices are far greater than my own.

I graduated from the University of Louisville with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish. Since before attending the university, I dreamed of working for an organization that provided English as a Second Language classes to His-

panics. If I had known while I attended the university that The Backside Learning Center existed, I would have volunteered here.



Melissa Johnson, Public Relations and Resource Development Coordinator, AmeriCorps VISTA 2008-2009

Throughout my year of service, I revamped the Learning Center's website, designed the e-newsletter you are reading now and planned several fundraising events. I knew that all of these experiences would build my resume but the main reason I did it

was because I wanted to contribute to an organization that helped Hispanics learn English. When the position did not have funding for the coming year, I knew I could not renew my service and continue to work with the Learning Center.

As my year of service draws to a close, I am satisfied with the work I did but also concerned about the Learning Center's ability to continue the work I have done. The Learning Center will depend on the support of its amazing volunteers. If you are interested in getting more involved in the Marketing and Fundraising aspect of the Learning Center, please contact Emily Dingman. Thanks for a great year!

FEATURED WISH LIST:

- 10 new head-phone sets with long cords
- Big, plastic chip bowls
- Ice bucket
- Paper Cutter
- Board Games
- Duct Tape
- Scrub Pads for washing dishes
- Towels and washcloths for the kitchenette

Special Events Update

3rd Annual Ladies Day at the Races

The 3rd Annual Ladies Day at the Races was a hit! Over 100 ladies attended and we brought in almost \$6000.

Special thanks to the following ladies for serving as our Ladies Day Committee: Kimber Albarado, Julia Bacon, Stephanie Deeley, Sara Dorman, Renee Hook and Jan Margerum

Special thanks to the following donors for donating items for the silent auction: Actor's Theatre, Amazing Green Planet, B's Purses, Bags by Broads, Bennie & Friends Salon, Brown-Forman, Cindy Borders Jewelry, Clay and Cotton, Clodhoppers, Delores Huffman, Dr. David Schaefer Aesthetic General Dentistry, D&W Silks, Inc., Episode 39 LLC, Fusion Salon, G Spinelli Designs, Glassworks, Herradura, James Hotels, José Arriaga, La Vida Java, Lenscrafters, Long Run Golf Course & Leslie Demling Bender, Louisville Marriot Downtown, Luis Gonzalez, Macca's, Porter's Lotion LLC, Qdoba, Shine, The Trail Store, Turf Club, Whim Originals, Woodford Reserve

Special thanks to the following sponsors who sponsored the event: Honorable Mentions - \$100.00: J. Lloyd Designs, Inc.; Home Cuisine; Stuedle, Spears & Francke CPA's

Special thanks to:

- Churchill Downs for the use of The Triple Crown Room
- Churchill Downs Racing Office for sponsoring the Trophy Presentation
- Churchill Downs Horticulture for the lovely floral arrangements
- Pretty Incredible Printing Company for printing the event invitations
- The trainers who donated: Wayne Catalano, Forrest Kaelin, Tom Proctor, Gary Simms
- The Learning Center students who served as escorts for the ladies



Pat Day Glass Signing

The Pat Day Glass Signing which took place on Saturday, November 22, benefited The Backside Learning Center and the Christ Chapel on the backside of Churchill Downs. The event brought in \$3000 and the Learning Center will receive 50% of these funds. Special thanks to Pat Day for signing the glasses, the volunteers who helped us clean them and sell them and to the anonymous donor who donated



them. We still have glasses from Belmont '94, Preakness '94, Preakness '95 and Preakness '96. We sold out of Derby '92 glasses. If you are interested in buying any of these glasses, contact the Learning Center. They have all been signed by Pat Day and cost \$20.00 each.

Photo Highlights from the Year



See the Photo Gallery section of the website for more photos!

Class in the Spotlight: Bilingual Game Hour



Written by: Emily Dingman

Bilingual Game Hour has changed a lot over the course of this year. We have introduced a number of new games and had success with many of them. At first, Bilingual Game Hour was very structured with vocabulary printed and handed out, and games designed to practice speaking in English and Spanish. As attendance seemed to drop, we began mixing in a few less structured activities to provide some variety and keep people interested, but always with the objective of exchanging language skills. The students and team all enjoy the suspense of the Jumbling Tower (aka Jenga), the competition of checkers, and the glee from winning a game of Bingo; the casual atmosphere seemed to bring attendance up again. For a few weeks, we saw everyone participating in a new Dominos game introduced by Melissa called Chicken Foot – The game had people laughing out loud and calling out “pata de pollo!!” all evening. It was quite a hit, for a few weeks

we even forgot about the Jumbling Tower! Uno and Brain Warp were two



Students and Volunteers playing Life during Bilingual Game Hour

games that got everyone saying numbers and colors. Uno cultivated friendly competition with players slinging draw fours to the person on their right or left, while Brain Warp required some team work to create number and color patterns for everyone to memorize and expand on. Since the game talks, it was a good way to practice commands and listening comprehension. Another game we tried and will probably reintroduce in the future was Pictionary. This one inspired camaraderie and laughter as teams worked together to

guess what their teammates' drawings meant.

Recently, students and volunteers enjoyed an exciting game of Monopoly in Spanish. It was interesting to buy and sell properties and teach about American capitalism as understood by the makers of Monopoly :). It was also entertaining for all seven players as we exchanged vocabulary and translated Chance, or Casualidad, cards and learned the names of the pieces (el cañón is the cannon, and the iron is la plancha). Even with the season coming to a close we have maintained good attendance at Bilingual Game Hour. Finding games that people can join whenever they walk into the room is one of our goals for the future, but so far having multiple games going at once has been a good way to include everyone. This program is one of the most fun to watch or participate in. It really cultivates a sense of community, and participants get to know each other in new ways.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

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

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR
HARD WORK AND TIME!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Contact Emily Dingman at the Learning Center if you are interested in volunteering.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWS-

LETTER: If you would like to write an article for the newsletter about a class or student you teach/volunteer with, please contact the Learning Center. We would love to have your contributions!

DATA ENTRY: Volunteer needed once per month to update student and volunteer hours for soccer, movie night, guitar and other programs in Microsoft Access. Experience with Microsoft Access preferable but we can train.

HORSEMEN'S GOLF SCRAMBLE PLANNING COMMITTEE:

We are already planning for our 2nd Annual Horsemen's Golf Scramble. If you would like to be a part of the planning commit-

tee, contact the Learning Center. Tasks will include planning the event, promoting and getting donations/sponsorships. Time commitment: meet once a month starting in January and any additional planning/promoting as necessary.

DERBY GIFT SHOP TEAM: We are already thinking about Derby. We need people to help get volunteers to work the Derby Gift Shop and pick out the merchandise we should sell. Time commitment: meet periodically starting in January, help out with the Derby Gift shop and any additional planning/promoting as necessary.

GRANTWRITER: This winter we are going to be focusing our efforts on fundraising and grantwriting. You don't have to have experience but it is preferred. Time commitment depends on the grant and the number of grants you would like

to write.

FUNDRAISING DINNER COMMIT-

TEE: We are planning a fundraising dinner tentatively scheduled in June. This would be the first time we have ever had the event. We need a committee to plan and organize the event. Time commitment: monthly meetings starting in January and any additional planning/promoting as necessary.

THE OUTRIDER'S SOCIETY

The Outrider's 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 Outrider's benefits. For more information, contact Julie Henry at 637-1111, x336 or online at: <http://www.derbymuseum.org/>