



NEWS

Spring 2014

What's the most exciting thing happening at the Center this spring? We'd have to say, it's the expansion of our volunteer program. For years college students, Center alumni and retired professionals have helped students 1-on-1 as tutors and Teaching Assistants.

Recently, this group of dedicated volunteers has grown to include career mentors, job coaches, and interviewers.

structors in class—Amazing! You can read more about this on pp 4 & 5 in this newsletter.

This is definitely a two-way street—these volunteers, all professionals in various sectors, bridge the classroom and the real world for English Center students. They are specialists in their fields interested in passing on their deep knowledge and experience. They are motivated to volunteer at the English Center because of our students' high



Trained career coaches, Mark Anthony Campoy and Fatima Aineb, teach a workshop on using the latest Google applications.

In February 2014 alone, volunteers provided 204 contact hours working directly with English Center students in workshops like the Google workshop pictured, in the Wednesday Drop-in Volunteer Lab, in tutoring outside of class and in assisting in-

engagement and eagerness to learn.

As the number and satisfaction of our volunteers increase, so do the professional skills and possibilities of our students — what a win-win situation!

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I must say that the English Center was one of my best experiences in CA. At the Center, I learned a great deal about academic writing and on top of that I met people from various countries. Today I stand with a TOEFL iBT score of 101/120 and that is partly thanks to the English Center. Today, I am an educator working in the NGO sector targeting marginalized young people in Macedonia.

A. Savevska '14



The English Center

Corporate Training for Industry *~from a Trainer's Perspective*

By Steven Kottenstette

A CTI trainer travels to the client sites (training rooms, conference rooms, apartments, meeting rooms in sub-acute hospitals or retirement homes) to deliver VESL – Vocational English as a Second Language - and/or computer skills training to the employees, staff or residents. The setting is often in a small on-site conference room where one must ‘make do’ (cramped and stuffy, maybe no internet, maybe your assigned room has been taken so you hunt for a new one for the day). Did you know a tablecloth can make an effective screen for your projector? One constant, though, is after the training, attendees say things like “I learned so much I could cry”, or the verbatim “Gracias por mi clase; yo amo a mi computacion clase” (Thanks for my class; I love my computer class”).

My teaching goal is to make sure every attendee feels they are an important person who can succeed. Each *technology training session* includes some simple things to remember (“Right-click on everything to see what you can do”) and also impressing upon them the big picture (“Many skills you learn in one software program apply to the other software programs”). Throughout their training they realize they can teach themselves many things using the same skills and processes they are learning in class. Each *VESL training session* has a ‘take away’, a template greeting or question or response or strategy to immediately apply to their daily tasks and interactions at work. (Social conversation like “How’s the family?”, workplace requests such as “When you have a minute, could you help me with a project?”, strategies such as *reminding people what you are talking about before adding new info or a related request.*) Customized training has immediate transfer into the workplace and so, builds the confidence of non-native English speakers working in a Bay Area English speaking corporation or company.



The EC 1-Stop Center Partners with Career Classes

By Magdalena Montalvo, Workforce Development Manager
and Angelica Garcia, WIA 1-Stop Manager

In 2013, the English Center launched a strong initiative to improve the effectiveness of the career center. Today, the Career Center sees with more student visitors than ever and everyone in career services, in particular the career teachers, is doing amazing work in preparing students for employer placements. To that end Eric, the Career Coordinator, and Shimali, the Career Placement Counselor, who joined the Career Center team in the Fall of 2013, fit-in perfectly with our

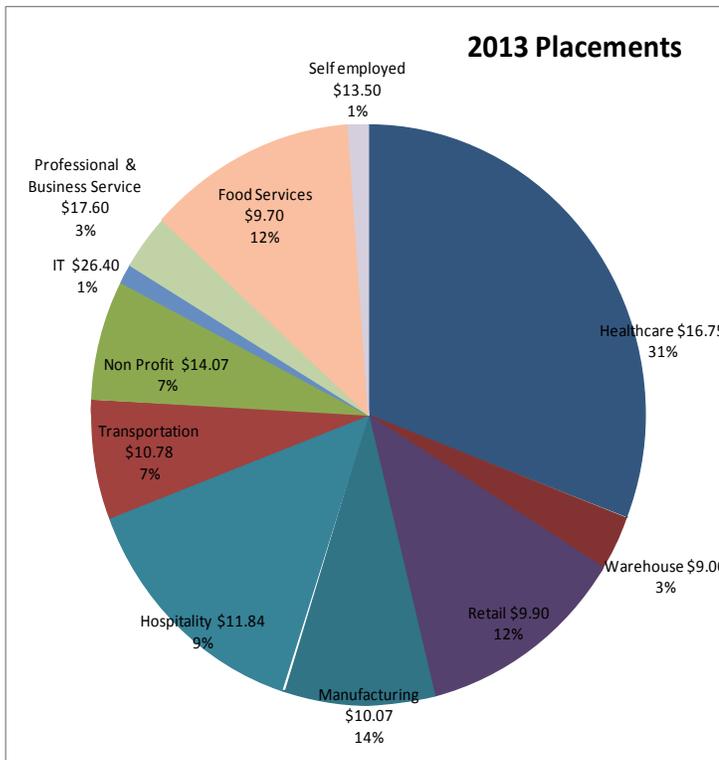
goals and since their arrival they have made excellent contributions to the Career Center Team.

Our career center placement data show that industries such as education, business and professional services paid the highest salaries for English Center students who received higher education in their home countries. Upon completion of the Career Readiness Program, previously educated English Center students have thrived in the workforce. For example, Crina Elena Nicolescu, with a marketing degree from Roma-

The EC 1-Stop Center Partners with Career Classes, continued

nia, was able to land an account executive position at Ricoh. Igor Toslovan, a trained accountant in Russia, has been working successfully as an accountant at Nady Systems Incorporated since his graduation. Others, with general education backgrounds like Xiaojie Chen, are working at high level positions in operations in the finance industry while many of the students with similar educational backgrounds are successful in obtaining positions as administrative assistants. The number of jobs within healthcare increased dramatically over the last year, with salaries from \$8.75/hr to \$34/hr. Frehiwot Admassu Woldamanu and Jacky Urias as well as other Career Readiness graduates with no prior training in healthcare obtained jobs as Care Providers, Certified Nursing Assistants and Dental Assistants. Huda Abdulsalm Karman, a trained MD, obtained employment at La Clinica de la Raza as a Healthcare Interpreter.

In 2014 our goal is to build our pool of external resources and employer contacts so that we can place students in higher paid occupations. The career events are integrated and focus on employer involvement while motivating our students to set higher goals when it comes to choosing a paid occupation. The Career Center continues to focus on building the employer network. Shimali has been successful in placing our beginning level English learners in the Hotel/Hospitality industry while the Healthcare Careers Pathway Project has been successful in the placement of students with higher levels of education and English proficiency. Janice has contributed by growing the number of external contacts with local employers such as Cost Plus, Smile Dental, and Eon Technologies.. Angelica and Larry, who provide WIA (Workforce Investment Act) services, are invaluable to our career center project and goals..



Row Labels	Number of Jobs	Average of Current Wage per hour
Information Technology	1	\$26.40
Professional & Business Services	3	\$17.60
Healthcare	28	\$16.75
Non-Profit	7	\$14.07
Self-employed	1	\$13.50
Hospitality	8	\$11.84
Transportation	7	\$10.78
Manufacturing	13	\$10.07
Food Services	11	\$9.70
Warehouse & Logistics	3	\$9.00
Retail	11	\$9.90
	93	\$13.60

88% of 2013 graduates found jobs & most of the rest continued their education at a college or university. Comparing sectors, the average hourly wage was \$13.60.

The iBTOEFL Testing Center, a Community Resource

The English Center is an official test center for the iBTOEFL, Internet based Test of English as a Foreign Language.

The TOEFL iBT® test, administered via the Internet, measures one's ability to use and understand English at the university level. And it evaluates the level of listening, reading, speaking and writing skills to perform academic tasks.

People who take this assessment test are:

- ◆ Students planning to study at a higher education institution
- ◆ English-language program admissions and exits
- ◆ Scholarship and certification candidates
- ◆ English-language learners who want to track their progress
- ◆ Students and workers applying for visas
- ◆ Intl health professionals qualifying for licensure
- ◆ Students and workers applying for visas
- ◆ Internationally-trained healthcare professionals needing to qualify for licensure

Between July 2012 and June 2013, 2383 iBTOEFL tests were administered at the English Center. The revenue from this helps to maintain the Center's technology programming for all students.

Volunteerism Thrives at the Center

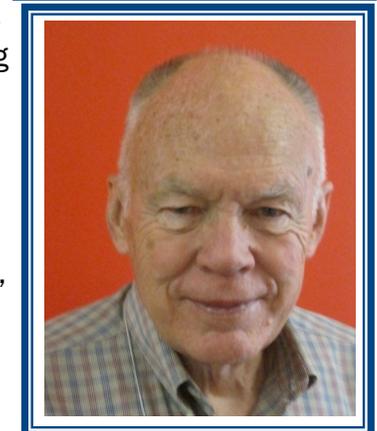
By Janice Tolman, Volunteer Coordinator

In January of 2014, our 18 loyal members of our community logged in more than 150 volunteer hours. Each day we receive nearly 8 hours of service freely given. As they enter the Center, each one slips on a badge to show their status as tutors or TAs. When they come, their work directly touches the lives of students and instructors.

Each day, you can see tutors sitting with students to form meaningful bonds, help them with homework, or enjoy a more free form cultural exchange. This is a rare opportunity for students to ask questions about the meaning of life in America and to represent themselves as new members of society. Importantly, the volunteers model community values and professionalism.

Teaching assistants form a second cadre of front-line volunteers and help insure the effectiveness of our program.

The TAs help teachers communicate instructions to small groups or help with paperwork. The TAs are not only helping students as they labor to speak clearly, write good sentences in English, or make their first Word document or Excel spreadsheet. They are giving their knowledge and receiving valuable experience for their futures as educators. Who are the volunteers? To name a few, Barbara and Jim, pictured here, retired from teaching and Ralph from the public sector.



Volunteerism Thrives at the Center, Continued

Tania retired from a private law practice. Ellen was a physical therapist in a large hospital, and Christine has been an educator and an entrepreneur.

Larry was computer programmer, and John was a computer engineer. Paul and John are scientific researchers working part-time. Marti and Nora currently manage nonprofits, and Linda is a marketing director. Erin, Emiko, Amanda, John and Michelle are preparing for new professions in teaching.

What brings these professional men and women to the English Center? Many are redirecting their lives toward healthier ties to the community. In some cases, volunteers wish to change away from work that provided little interaction or personal reward.

Rather, at the English Center, the volunteers meet people from around the world who value education and truly need the gifts of time they receive. Added together, their gifts of knowledge and patience are phenomenal. They foster our school spirit and tangibly improve the quality of our school community.



Career Coach Mark Anthony Campoy conducts his first workshop.



A busy day at the drop-in Tutoring Center

Career Coaches Begin to Mentor English Center Students

By Janice Tolman

In March, two trained career coaches, Mark Anthony Campoy and Fatima Aineb, kicked off the new volunteer job-mentoring program at the English Center. To ensure job readiness and our career program success, they will meet with students weekly to help plan the job search. Their tasks include polishing resumes, researching jobs on line, networking, and of course, the job interview. Watch for news of their coming successes.

Success in the Alameda County VESL Project

By April Shandor, ACVESL Coordinator

In February, 2013, the English Center became a partner in a consortium of agencies dedicated to supporting limited English speaking immigrants and refugees in their English development and career pathways. Other partners in the consortium are Refugee Transitions and Lao Family Community Development in Oakland, Hayward Adult School, and the College of Alameda One-Stop Career Center. Through federal grant assistance provided to the County of Alameda Workforce Benefits Administration and the International Rescue Committee, these agencies work together to provide vocational English language classes and employment services to the participants in the program.

When students enter the AC VESL program at the English Center, they begin attending afternoon classes at the English Center. These classes include Grammar, Reading and Writing, Computer, and Community English. The students are also given the option to participate in an extra computer lab time, when they can get help from a lab assistant with homework and computer programs. When the students progress to a higher level of proficiency in English, they enter a more intensive job search phase of their program, working with employment counselors at the Lao Family or Alameda One-Stop Center.

At the start of the program in February, 2013, the English Center had one AC VESL student, Idris Kamis. Idris successfully completed the program with 90-day job retention at the Black Bear Diner in Emeryville. Since then, 34 more students have studied at the English Center through the program. The students have represented a diverse range of countries, including Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Burma, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mexico, El Salvador, Cambodia, Italy, Iran, Russia, and Mongolia. Eight of these students completed the program with 90-day

job retention, many of them working in the hospitality and customer service sector. Fourteen of the students are currently studying at the English Center, working on further improvement of their language skills before transitioning into the U.S. workforce.

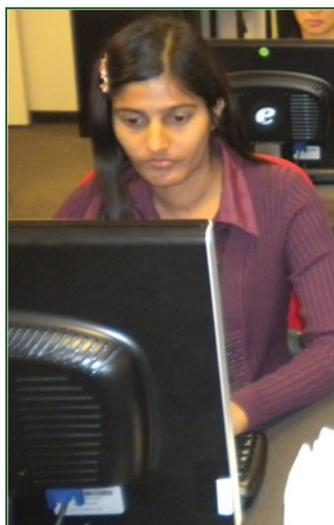
When asked to write about their experiences at the English Center, the students shared the following:

I am Supajini Kumarasamy and I like to study at the English Center.

I am Saga Gebre. I like to speak, learn, write and listen since I came to the English Center. Now I am interested in my English. I like the English Center very much.



Left to right: Supajini Kumarasamy, Saga Gebre, and Ebtisam Shenwar



I am Thusijini Kumarasamy. I like to study at the English Center. Here the teachers are very nice and helpful. I like this school. I think my English speaking is improving. The English Center is a very helpful school for me.



My name is Awet Mehari. I have been at the English Center for six months. What I enjoy the most is learning in computer class. I love using different computer programs, such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.



I am Azucena Garcia and I like to study English. Since I came to the English Center, I am more confident to speak English.

I am Pietro Fileni. I have been at the English Center since November 1st. For me, it has been a good experience to study here.



I'm Sophal Song. I'm so happy to be in the English Center. I have been in the English Center a few months. I learn a lot of things. I learn English grammar. The best thing I enjoy the most is learning computer programs.

My name is Omar (not pictured). I'm from Iraq. I have been at the English Center for six months. I'm very excited to study here. I think the English Center is the best school in the Bay Area. They teach Computer, Reading, Writing, Grammar, and Community English. When I came here, I didn't speak English well. Now I feel much better in reading and writing.

What's New in our Classes? Spring 2014

By Lynne Wilkins, Associate Director

Advanced students in our **Career Readiness Program (CRP)** study Business Communications, Introduction to Data Management and Quickbooks on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These classes teach practical skills that build on the transferable skills our students bring and combined are strong support in each students' job search.



In the Idioms and Conversation class, advanced students in our **Academic and Professional Program (APP)** are building spontaneous conversational fluency; watching films and documentaries addressing a variety of social issues, taking notes and then using the notes in conversations. Which social issue? Which films? Which documentaries? Racial segregation and civil rights and non-violent protest; Rosa Parks Mini Bio and Rosa Parks Bus (YouTube) and The Long Walk Home.

For the beginning and intermediate level students in both the **CRP** and **APP**, the English Literacy/Civics grant the English Center has participated in since 2002 provides practical life skills using English. This Spring (A session), students are learning how to call (in English) into a healthcare appointment system like Kaiser, make an appointment and then during the appointment, interface with nurses and doctors and pharmacists.

In Spring B, students will share food, recipes, nutrition and exercise regimens as they learn about the changes from the 'Food Pyramid' to the 'My Plate', US Department of Agriculture.



What's New in our Classes? Spring 2014, continued

What are we reading?

- ◆ **Low intermediate** students read *News for You*, a weekly news source with current events and human interest stories written for adult learners (native and non native English speakers).
- ◆ **Intermediate** students read *Upfront*, a weekly newsmagazine co-published by Scholastic Inc and The New York Times.
- ◆ **Advanced** students read (Spring A) *Work on Purpose* which tells the stories of five social entrepreneurs and their journeys from struggle and uncertainty to significance and success. The book also features a compendium of more than 150 career resources and programs. Now, they are reading *Seedfolks*; Newbery Medal winner Paul Fleischman weaves characters as diverse as the plants they grow into a multi-layered exploration of how a community is born and nurtured in an urban environment.



Our Student Body Reflects the World

The students enrolled in 2012-13 were the most diverse group ever!
There were **292** students from **45** different countries!

Africa	Asia, East	Asia, South & Central
Algeria 9 3%	Burma 18 6%	Afghanistan 3 1%
Dem. Rep. of the Congo 2 1%	Cambodia 1 0%	Bhutan 2 1%
Eritrea 14 5%	China 70 24%	India 4 1%
Ethiopia 17 6%	Japan 1 0%	Kazakhstan 1 0%
Libya 1 0%	Malaysia 2 1%	Nepal 1 0%
Nigeria 1 0%	Mongolia 17 6%	Total So & Cen Asia: 11 4%
South Sudan 1 0%	Philippines 2 1%	Europe
Total Africa: 45 15%	Taiwan 1 0%	Belarus 1 0%
Americas	Thailand 2 1%	Czech Rep. 1 0%
Brazil 1 0%	Vietnam 4 1%	Denmark 1 0%
Colombia 3 1%	Total East Asia: 118 40%	Estonia 1 0%
Cuba 2 1%		Moldova 2 1%
Dominican Republic 1 0%		Romania 2 1%
El Salvador 16 5%		Russia 4 1%
Guatemala 14 5%		Ukraine 1 0%
Haiti 1 0%		Total Europe: 13 5%
Mexico 26 9%		Middle East
Nicaragua 3 1%		Iran 12 4%
Peru 3 1%		Iraq 1 0%
		Saudi Arabia 14 5%
USA 3 1%		Yemen Arab Rep 5 2%
Total Americas: 73 25%		Total Middle East: 32 11%
	No. of Countries 45	
	Number of Students 292	



Come study with us!

The English Center
66 Franklin St., Suite 220
Jack London Square
Oakland, CA 94607



Tel: (510) 836-6700
Fax: (510) 836-6900
Email: info@englishcenter.edu
Website: www.englishcenter.edu