



the Lantern



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A newsletter of Presentation Lantern Center, Dubuque, Iowa
Sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, Iowa

Bienvenidos! Salam Ale Kom! Huānyíng! Dobrodošli! Welcome!

by Sr. Beth Kress, PBVM

As the door to Presentation Lantern Center opens, a friendly smile and word of welcome greet everyone who enters. In the nearly seven years since that door first opened, almost 600 individuals from five continents and 38 countries have come to the center.

Hospitality is the key to the experience that gives visitors the opportunity to learn and share as they work hard to get to know a new language and another culture.

NAMING CHALLENGES

It is stressful adjusting to a new country and culture. After coming from China to Chicago in 1997 and now living in Dubuque, Min Zhuang states her biggest challenge with one word: "Language!"

"Not knowing English," comments Lisbhet from Mexico who has been coming to Presentation Lantern Center for a year.

"Speaking English is difficult," says Azar from Iran.

"The first four months in Columbus, Ohio, after I arrived from Ethiopia were very challenging," says Argaw. "After I moved to Dubuque it took from February to May to get a job. That, too, was difficult for me and my family."

LIKING THE LEARNINGS

Learning happens as visitors and volunteer tutors work diligently with vocabulary, conversation and many cultural questions. As visitors strengthen their English language skills, they learn more about the culture and customs in America.

"I understand English better and I am learning things about cooking," remarks Azar as she gets more comfortable reading recipes and using standard English measurements.

Vocabulary and conversation are most important to Lisbhet. "Learning English is necessary in order to study and take the citizenship test," says Lisbhet as she approaches her July test date in Des Moines.

"Learning English and more vocabulary have helped me," states Min Zhuang as she also prepares for the citizenship test. Friends help her as she learns the English names for food and does her grocery shopping.

"I started to learn and improve my English at the center," remarks Argaw. "This has helped me talk to people at my job and communicate with people where I have a bank account. Coming to Presentation Lantern Center helped me find a job at Hy-Vee."

Welcome is a heart-warming word in any language.



Argaw, Ethiopia



Azar, Iran



Lisbhet, Mexico



Min Zhuang, China

LANTERN CENTER

Welcome



by Sr. Corine Murray, PBVM, Executive Director



What does hospitality look like at the center? One of the ways we welcome visitors and recognize their rich diversity is to acknowledge their

countries of origin. A world map hangs on the bulletin board in the main hallway. Above the map, the names of the countries of origin are posted. In early June the thirty-eighth country was added to the list.

These visitors come with stories, wisdom and dreams. They come from five continents, from varied cultures and they speak many different languages. Over time, names that initially seemed new and strange become familiar. Many visitors become good friends with each other and their tutors. English serves as the common language.

Visitors are proud to point out to others their country of origin. When a new person comes to the center, it is our custom to have all of the visitors and tutors stand in a circle, introduce themselves and share their country of origin.

At the mid-point of each two-hour session, everyone is invited to take a break. Hospitality is provided and more conversation takes place. In significant ways, the center is a melting pot for these recent newcomers and their American friends. All are welcome in this place.

FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS

Join Our Winning Team



by Mary Jean Gregory

HELP WANTED: Internationally recognized organization seeks caring individuals to be “cultural brokers,” meeting weekly (or more often) with visitors from other countries. Teaching background helpful but not necessary; patience required. Great benefits.

In her book *In the Middle of Everywhere*, author Mary Pipher refers to those who welcome and assist foreign visitors as “cultural brokers.” Presentation Lantern Center is fortunate to have 70 such volunteers.

Presentation Lantern Center volunteers are nearly as diverse as the population they serve. The youngest volunteers are in high school and the oldest are enjoying their golden years. Both men and women volunteer, and many, though by no means all, are educators – retired, current, or future. Most volunteers tutor language skills, some teach cooking classes and others supervise children’s activities.

Executive Director Sr. Corine Murray has scheduled center hours to meet individual needs. Volunteers come for a two-hour session once or twice a week. Several come more frequently. The tutoring volunteer teaches English vocabulary, refines pronunciation, explains American culture and prepares the visitor for the citizenship test. Each volunteer at the center is a welcoming presence in a foreign land.

In order to provide optimum one-on-one instruction, the center needs more volunteers – you, please.

You’ll be richly compensated. Volunteer Dianne Harris says that her rewards come “through smiles, hugs, and ‘Aha’ moments.”

Desi Schmitz has found that “Diversity is a wonderful thing! It is a great feeling to be able to help those from other cultures learn about ours and the English language.”

Maxine Griep says that “just being involved with enthusiastic students is a reward in itself. My work with (my student) has been a real refresher course for me on what we take for granted in our form of government. Both of my students are so eager to learn, which makes our time together simply fly by.”

Come, join the team at Presentation Lantern Center. Contact Sr. Corine Murray at 563-557-7134 or lanterncenter@aol.com to find out what opportunities are waiting for you.



Visitors and tutors enjoy a day at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. Left to right: Min Zhuang (China), Mary Jean Gregory, Thelma Sbarra, Domingo (Mexico) and Julie Casey.



1501 Jackson Street, Suite B
Dubuque, Iowa 52001
563.557-7134
lanterncenter@aol.com

Presentation Lantern Center is a drop-in center offering hospitality, educational opportunities and advocacy to women and their children who are striving to better their lives. Sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, Iowa, the center is a non-profit organization.

HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Tuesday, Thursday
1:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Contact us at
563.557.7134
lanterncenter@aol.com

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We welcome your support and prayers. Your generosity touches many lives and hearts from around the world. Please make checks payable to Presentation Lantern Center.

PHOTO GALLERY Life at the Center

Visitors and volunteers learn together at Presentation Lantern Center, tending to the intricacies of the English language and teaming up to read recipes, mix and bake ingredients and taste prepared dishes. Children and volunteers read stories, assemble puzzles and play games that teach many lessons.

Left to Right: TOP LEFT, Haley and Emily (parents from Mexico); TOP RIGHT, Lindz (China) and tutor Maxine Griep enjoy hard work and conversation; BOTTOM LEFT, Tutor Desi Schmitz reviews vocabulary with ShanShan (Taiwan); BOTTOM RIGHT, Bianca (Mexico) makes “butter dips” with food preparation tutor Betty Allen.

