



the Lantern

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A newsletter of the Presentation Lantern Center

Sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, IA

Making the world a better place★

Earlier this year, we got an out-of-the-blue call from Progressive Processing (Hormel) in Dubuque. A team of their employees, one of whom was Rene Meza, had designed a system that would save the company over 7 MILLION gallons of water, allowing the plant to earn a company-wide contest for environmental stewardship and design. As an award to the plant, Progressive Processing was able to select their nonprofit of choice for a \$5,000 donation. Rene and his colleagues chose the Presentation Lantern Center in honor of Rene's ingenuity, passion and dedication to improving both the facility and the environment. Rene and his wife Celina have studied with us in the past, and both of Rene's parents were long-time students at the Presentation Lantern Center; his mother still attends weekly tutoring. His high-school-aged daughter Sofi has been a welcoming and compassionate intern with us here at the Lantern Center. Rene is pictured here with his family, including his wife Celina and their 3 daughters.



We often see how people who receive education and assistance from the Lantern Center give back, as future tutors, as advocates and in any other way they can, and we are thankful for the

many donations that support our work, but we can't think of a more amazing story that demonstrates the full circle of community that lifts us all and improves conditions for our community and the Earth!

We appreciate our volunteers!★★

For the second year, we held a picnic at Eagle Point Park in honor and appreciation of our volunteers. It was a beautiful June evening, despite the wildfire haze that hung over the Mississippi River. Beth Whisler, left, and Becky Taylor-Harris earned our Lantern awards for their exceptional dedication and skill in long-term volunteer tutoring. Both are energetic,

dependable, creative and flexible in how they work with their students.

Beth has helped a beginning English language learner develop confidence to speak with family and friends, and proudly answer questions on her own at appointments. After years of hard work and studying the geography, history, and government of the United States as well as learning reading, writing and speaking in English at an older age, the student earned her citizenship as well. Beth and her student are health enthusiasts and avid walkers. Beth also finds creative ways to maximize the "brain workout" of language acquisition and foster the socialization that is a great benefit of tutoring at the Lantern Center.

Becky has worked with a student for many years now, helping his language skills to increase exponentially. She has helped the student

before and after the pandemic, and together they have shared life's joys and challenges. Her student's English skills have continued to grow tremendously over the years, to the point where he now interprets for colleagues and is in a managerial role. They've developed a friendship between their families.

We look forward to hosting this event again next year! It's truly humbling to reflect on the thousands of hours that our volunteers dedicate to English-language and citizenship education, to building relationships and to providing a smiling face of welcome to those new in our community. It's also a wonderful way to mingle with family members who don't often get to come to the Lantern Center but see the impact it has on the life of a loved one. (Photo credit: Hannah Laubscher)



Lantern Center students become new citizens

We have been humbled by the hard work and subsequent success of a number of four new citizens recently! Pictured by the American flag is Jorge Lemus and his dedicated tutor Jim Heinle, who accompanied him to Des Moines 3 times in the past 6 months for the entire process! Pictured studying intently for his citizenship is Javier Ramirez with his tutor Sr. Marci Blum. Javier is now also a U.S. citizen!

Studying to become a U.S. citizen and passing the exam is quite an achievement. Unfortunately,



it's not a path that's open to all of our immigrant and refugee neighbors. In fact, very few of them. It's common for people to wonder why every immigrant doesn't pursue citizenship. Besides the expense, time commitment and skills required, immigration regulations close the door to many of those who would like to take an oath of allegiance to the U.S. and enjoy the responsibilities and privileges conferred by citizenship. As we help those we can to navigate the bureaucracy of our broken immigration system, we also must continue to advocate for systemic change and sane solutions that promote family unity and economic vitality and that prioritize human need above all.



Continuing support for the Presentation Lantern Center

The best-laid plans of mice and men sometimes change, and after the last newsletter reached you, our marketing and development committee re-configured our Lighting the Lantern fundraiser, following Dupaco's generous offer to host it at their rooftop space just across the street from us. Dupaco also generously provided food and drink for the event.

Instead of the format we used in previous years, this event was free, but we prioritized invitations for those who were newly learning about the Lantern Center, along with a few students, volunteers, supporters and board members who could speak from their own experience about the Center's impact.

It was a beautiful night for education and advocacy, and everyone came away learning a little more about immigrant experiences and the role we play in supporting immigrants and refugees in our community. Though we did not charge for tickets this year, we hope that the event will garner future support for the center and help create connections that will ensure our long-term financial stability, as well as bring additional opportunities to serve our neighbors.

We are humbled to have been the recipients of a number of significant grants in the last year, including support from the DRA, the City of Dubuque, United Way of Dubuque Area Tri-States, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (La Crosse) and the Sisters of St. Francis (Dubuque). And of course, the biggest shout-out goes to our founders, the Sisters of the Presentation, who continue to make our work possible.

We also rely on the support of each one of you, through donations, through volunteer tutoring, through prayers and through everything you do to spread the word and lift up our mission. We couldn't do our work—helping people learn the skills they need and building friendships across the community—without your help. Individual donations are our single largest funding source.

As you're out and about in the community in October, look for canisters at Kwik Stop and Dairy Queen. Donations this month will benefit the Presentation Lantern Center! We are proud to be a recipient of the Kwik Cares program: thank you!



SCHMID INNOVATION CENTER
900 Jackson Street
Suite LL5-1
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

The Presentation Lantern Center is a drop-in center offering hospitality, educational opportunities and advocacy to adult immigrants, especially women, who are striving to better their lives. Founded by the Sisters of the Presentation, the Center is generously sustained through donations from our founders and individual donors like you. Thank you and God bless you.

HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday:
10 am-3 pm

Tuesday and Thursdays:
1-7 pm

Contact us at

563-557-7134
info@thelanterncenter.org

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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.

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Dear Friends of the Lantern Center,

We have some wonderful news to share! PBS gave us a generous gift recently. The gift of time and coverage. The segment they filmed for us would have cost us many thousands of dollars if we had hired a private videography company to cover us. Further, it would not have had the reach Iowa PBS has.

Please, take a look at our video. It's a beautiful snapshot of how the center started with testimonial from one of the Lantern Center's first students, Dora Serna. If receiving this electronically, simply click on the link below. Or, type in IowaPBS.org, and in the search bar type in: Iowa life episode 102 (minute 17:25).

<https://www.pbs.org/video/lantern-center-5tiqtl/>



Dora Serna is pictured speaking in the center, and Sr. Corine Murray is to her left, with her arm around Dora. Photo is from a past NunsOnTheBus.org event.

It is always a joy to talk with the founder and former Director of the Lantern Center for its first 14 years, Sr. Corine Murray. She is featured in the PBS segment above and we had the honor of her presence at our Lighting the Lantern event in late September, where we invited lots of community members - both those who have been long time tutors, students and supporters and others who, prior to this fall, were not aware of us. After the event she sent us a beautiful letter of gratitude, and this excerpt is too beautiful and inspirational not to share:

"There are libraries of wisdom and experience inside the heads of immigrants. When the time is right for them to tell their sacred stories of surviving and

thriving, the center will be remembered, and will hold a place of honor. The presence of many benefactors that I worked with, and their ongoing commitment to the mission of the center was heartwarming. Perhaps, hearing others' stories gives them a new appreciation for their own trailblazing ancestors.

Both directly and indirectly, so many individuals and their families have navigated unbelievable challenges and hardships. Hospitality on this journey with learning a new language and culture is truly a blessing."

- Sr. Corine Murray, PBVM, Fall 2023

We are truly, incredibly blessed by generous community of supporters we have and all the hardworking adult language learners and their families who work tirelessly at improving their language skills, which helps them personally but also provides great economic benefit to Dubuque and the tri-state area, as it empowers them to utilize their bilingual (and more often, multi-lingual!) skill set in the workforce and to be even more rooted in our beautiful state. Thank you all, for everything you make possible, and for all the time, effort and money you invest in these beautiful relationships!



*With
Sincere Gratitude,
Megan T. Biggs
Executive Director*

★ **Welcoming immigrants from around the neighborhood and across the globe**

www.TheLanternCenter.org