

ISSUE 6
MAY-JUNE 2011

The Alliance for Multicultural
Community Services



THE BIG THANKS

IN THIS ISSUE:

Success throughout the
Alliance

Volunteer Involvement

Upcoming Events

Multicultural Recipes

week, provided by the culinary artists (Staff) of the Alliance. We hope you enjoy the stories and especially the food!

Success Stories:

ESL: The ability to communicate with people is something many take for granted. Unless you've travelled or worked with foreigners you probably haven't encountered a situation where no matter how frantically you gesture with your

works hard with people from all over the world to help students master the art of communication. On the road to self-sufficiency, mastering English is the first step towards independence and especially employment. Below are success stories from our very own ESL students:

These are some ways in which this class has improved my life. This class has helped me to improve my writing and communication skills. I feel comfortable when I talk to my kids, my neighbors and my friends. I was hesitant to answer the phone. Now I make appointments, ask for assistance and find out information by phone. I solve many problems in no time. Besides the grammar and vocabulary exercises I have gained from this class, I learn more about life lessons such as improving my health, filling out applications, managing credit cards, and reading labels and

Hot off the press the Alliance's sixth issue of the Big Thanks! Please read up on the happenings of our agency and feel free to provide us feedback and ideas on how we can better serve our community! This issue is filled with hopeful stories and fun activities that have occurred over the past two months. Also, new to our newsletter will be the Multicultural Recipe section. Look forward to a new recipe, from a different country every



hands or try to communicate with drawings, your words will fall on deaf ears if you don't know the language. Language is absolutely imperative to successfully adjust to life in the US. Our ESL department

THE ALLIANCE FOR MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY SERVICES

bills. During lessons, I like the information from my teacher, relating to social and economical situations in America. By reading the book Robinson Crusoe which the teacher chose for the class, I learn how to make a good summary in English and how to survive in worst conditions. I have also developed the habit of reading books in English. The self-confidence I have from this class has given me strength to confront difficulties in my life.- Louise Mparatalikubwabo is a student from Rwanda and her native language is French.

IDA Program: The Alliance's Individual Development Account (IDA) Program is a shining example of how financial education and coaching can help individuals reach their full saving potential. For example, Mr. Yric Scott successfully completed the Assets for Independence (AFI) Program in April and was



able to purchase his first home as a result. Yric and his wife had been renters in the past and decided it was finally time to invest in a home for their family. The

program helped Yric set a budget that dramatically curbed spending and allowed room for saving. In conjunction with the AFI program, he completed financial education classes and a workshop for first-time home owners. The amount he saved was matched 2 to 1 and thanks to the IDA program he was able to purchase his home this year!

Resettlement: The resettlement process is a painstakingly difficult time in a refugee's life. For 6-8 months, case managers work with their clients in order to get them settled into life in

Houston and self-sufficient prior to their assistance ending. A lot happens in this short period and while everyone struggles to get on their feet, there are always a few shining stars that become the success stories we would like to share.

Recently a small family from Rwanda arrived and was enrolled in the Match



Grant Program,

which provides more assistance to clients, but for a shorter period of time. After only 1 month, the husband was filling out job applications and took the initiative to register for a training to become a Nurse Assistant. Furthermore, he managed to find a job at BP working in the cafeteria and was able to save up to purchase his first vehicle.

To date, he continues to work full-time and attends trainings on the weekends, regardless of the fact that he is struggling with the advanced level of English he encounters there. Wanting to improve her English as she looks for work, his wife took advantage of the ESL classes offered by the Alliance and registered for class. Currently, their daughter awaits the upcoming school year and will be starting first grade, while their 1 year old son will be staying at home with mom until she too finds work. Taking dramatic strides to better their lives we are confident this family will find comfort in their new lives in the U.S.

Kijana Teens: The Kijana Teens Youth Program wants to express its appreciation for the generosity of Stephanie Roff, the Houston Girl



Scouts, and friends that supported the program by generously donating books for high school and middle school aged students.

These donations will serve to empower the refugee/ Gultfton area students with knowledge and equip them for academic success.

The donation drive included books from basic to advanced levels in math, history, geography, science, and English. The program was fortunate to receive SAT prep books that will help students as they look forward to pursuing a higher education.

Furthermore, the group contributed everything from fiction books relating to Greek and Nordic mythology and nonfiction books such as Almanacs, Atlases, and Encyclopedias covering a wide spectrum of fascinating topics.



The Kijana Teens' Library is now full of attention grabbing books which were warmly received with enthusiasm from the students. We cannot thank Stephanie's group enough for their generosity and thoughtfulness; they are truly making a difference in our youth's and refugee's lives!

Volunteer Involvement

For the past year Liz Unger has been actively working with the community at Los Arcos to prepare refugee children and their parents

to successfully transition into their lives in the United States. For the past year, Liz has served the Los Arcos community as a volunteer,



teacher and mentor. When asked what she wanted to accomplish in the long term at Los Arcos, these were her thoughts, "... to build a sense of community among all refugees within Los Arcos; to celebrate individuality while also pointing out common traits among all the children, to demonstrate an understanding of respect for all cultures and property; and to further develop



communication skills through ESL." We applaud Liz's volunteer work and look forward to the coming months. Please

contact Methode Butoyi via e-mail: methodb@allianceontheweb.org regarding volunteer opportunities at Los Arcos.

The Alliance would also like to thank the volunteers from Global Frontier Mission group for helping out the Alliance and our wonderful refugee community. Volunteers worked to sort donated items and create a positive free-shopping



event for Alliance clients that attended the 2 day event. Clients were able to pick from tables piled high with quality clothing for the summer time and especially for interviews. The clothing event successfully served over 25 families who were extremely pleased with the selection and excited to see what we will offer come fall. This event was a huge success and the Alliance will be looking to host similar events in the future.

Upcoming Events

Metro Event: The Alliance ESL Department in conjunction with the Metro store will be hosting an event to benefit Alliance clients by enrolling them in the Metro Q-Card program which allows students, elderly individuals, and disabled persons to apply for discounted fare. Furthermore, the Metro Q-Card program allows individuals in transit to transfer buses for free within a 3 hour period! This program will be a huge assistance to refugees and local community members, saving them a trip to the Metro Store downtown. Please join us on July 20th from 11:00 am to 2:00 p.m. in order to register for your Metro Q-Card. Look forward to similar events from Metro in the future and contact Sandra Buchholz at 713.776.4700 ext. 106 regarding this event.

Multicultural Recipe

Our recipe comes from our very own French case manager, Ms. Audrey Querbes. To make French potatoes (not fries) you will need the following ingredients: garlic, olive oil, parsley, 4 thinly sliced potatoes and salt.

1. Chop up 3 tbs. of parsley and 2 tbs. of garlic, set

aside.

2. Heat 4 tbs. of olive oil in medium sized pan at medium heat. Once oil has heated add thinly sliced potatoes.
3. Next add the garlic and parsley and stir.
4. Allow the potatoes to cook uncovered for 5 minutes.
5. Cover pan and cook covered for the remaining 15 minutes.

Serve with beef or pork. Also, a red wine such as Chateau Saint Jean Pinot Noir will add a special touch to this wonderful meal. We hope you enjoy this meal and that you look forward to more recipes from around the world in future editions!



The Alliance is a community based, United Way agency and a 501(c) 3. We are happy to receive in-kind donations of furniture, house wares, gently used clothing and shoes, office supplies, and much more. Donations are tax deductible in accordance with the federal law. Please contact us if you are interested in donating items and/ or funds.

Let us know if you would like to sign up a friend for our newsletter list or if you would like to unsubscribe to the list. Agency updates can be found at www.allianceontheweb.org.