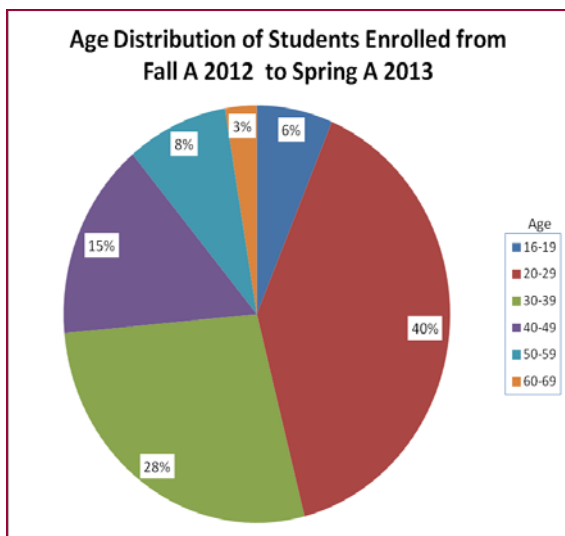




**NEWS**

*Spring 2013*

**W**hen we're asked what makes the English Center different from other language schools or workforce development organizations, our first answer is usually the diversity of the student body. This is not just reflected in the range of languages and ethnicities you'll find, but also in the age range of the students. The largest number are between 20 and 29, and the second largest, between 30 and 39. But, 6% are 19 or younger and 3% are 60 or older!



In 2011-12, we had our largest enrollment ever—328 students from 44 different countries studying at the English Center. You can see them listed on page 10.

Some of the articles in this newsletter focus on these students, F-1 visa students and immigrant students, all ambitious to succeed in their academic and career goals. You can read about Julio Tamayo Lopez, an epidemiologist from Cuba; Jian Di Laing, a student now journalist from China; Nouf Alghahany, a journalist now student from Saudi Arabia; Jaber Aljaeed, an alum now pursuing an MS degree in Industrial Engineering (you met him as a student in last spring's newsletter) and

Djibrine Mainassara, a transplanted nonprofit manager from Niger, newly graduated and now working as a program administrator at Pangaea Global AIDS Foundation. You can

imagine how privileged we staff and faculty feel to meet these students on their career pathways and to help them with a critical piece—language and acculturation + access to funding and resources.

The Promising Practice described on page 4 gives a glimpse of how we

do this for beginning students and the letter quoted on page 7 illustrates how our classes help more advanced level students.

Beyond the classroom, career and education counselors work to connect students with their next steps—internships, licensure, career placements and university placements. The International Student Office, the Healthcare Career Pathways Office and the One-Stop Career Center are there to help students negotiate these next steps.

And then we have the pleasure of seeing them accomplish their goals, as Bina Gurung, pictured on the right, recently did. Well done, Bina, and every one who helped her!

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**Executive director Marcy Jackson congratulating Bina Gurung—HCP participant and newly licensed RN!**

## EC 1-Stop Customized Training Spans California!

**C**TI is customized training (or classes) for the employees of local Bay Area employers or the members of local unions who provide training at the employer site or for residents of affordable housing communities. This fee-for-service program has continued to grow and the English Center is providing training all around the Bay Area and across the state. To date, the English Center has 20 single day Basic Computer or Basic Word/Excel trainings from Fresno to San Rafael to Daly City to San Jose. The client is the acute care division of SEIU-UHW West and Joint Employer, Education Fund. The English Center also provides Workplace Essential Skills VESL training for the long-term care division.

Another client is Kyocera Document Solutions Development America Inc in Concord. The English Center is providing Effective Business Communication training for hardware and software engineers, originally from Japan.

Upcoming trainings will include Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) at affordable housing communities around the state and Job Search and Career Readiness workshops for VSPA spouses (Visiting Scholar/Post Doctorate Affairs) as well as VESL training for RSSP employees (Residential and Student Services Programs) both at UC Berkeley.



### **The EC 1-Stop Center Partners with Career Classes Angelica Garcia, WIA 1-Stop Manager & Julia McGurk, Career Education Coordinator**

**T**his year, the English Center One-Stop has made some improvements in the coordination of classroom activities with One-Stop services.

In order to ensure more effective career placements, the One-Stop is working more closely in collaboration with the career education

classes at the English Center.

#### Step one: Career Portfolios

The English Center Career Education Coordinator has created a new assessment process for students. Each student must complete a level appropriate career portfolio, which at a minimum captures short and long term job goals, previous work experience, training and

skills, and which at an advanced level includes resumes, lists of references, and cover letters. Career teachers assist students in the completion of the portfolios which are uploaded electronically so that both students and the One-Stop have access to helpful work placement documents. Portfolios are helping us to:

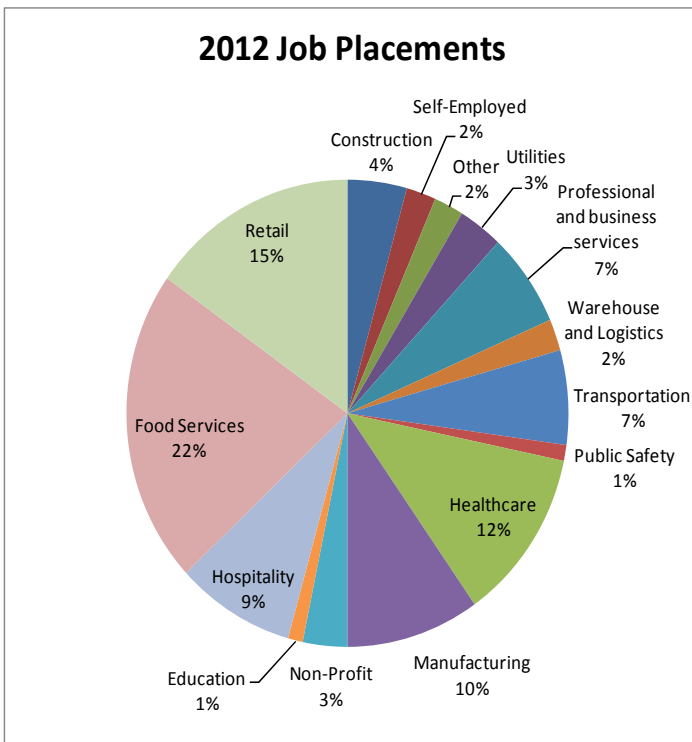
- ◆ better prioritize placements for those students who are most in need and the best equipped to begin work in the U.S.
- ◆ ensure that each student is being served to the best of our abilities
- ◆ empower students to take control of their job searches; students now are able to be more proactive and have a file of resources they can take with them after graduation.

**Step two:** Greater use of English Center One-Stop Resources

- ◆ East Bay Works – Current career class teachers have been introduced to using the East Bay Works website and job search resources from the website have been incorporated into course curriculum. Students are currently using the

online resume builder, uploading resumes and researching current job postings that fit both their short and long term career goals. These activities help students to actively participate in employment services, and learn skills that can help them post graduation in a safe and supervised environment.

- ◆ Key Train and Work Keys – The English Center provides students with free access to Key Train and Work Keys. At the beginning of each session students are enrolled and take the Work Keys pre-test. Career teachers work with students to complete Key Train requirements and the English Center pays for students to take the Work Keys tests. Test certificates are printed for students and added to Career Portfolios. Strong Work Keys scores have the benefit of helping students : 1) to better understand and practice skills applicable to their job goals, 2) to better engage current employer needs locally, 3) to demonstrate tangible proof of skill sets here in the United States.



Row Labels	Number of Jobs	Average of Current Wage per hour
Construction	4	\$21.88
Self-Employed	2	\$14.50
Other	2	\$14.00
Utilities	3	\$13.67
Professional and business services	6	\$13.30
Warehouse and Logistics	2	\$12.50
Transportation	6	\$12.28
Public Safety	1	\$11.50
Healthcare	11	\$11.17
Manufacturing	9	\$11.12
Non-Profit	3	\$10.57
Education	1	\$10.00
Hospitality	8	\$9.51
Food Services	20	\$9.17
Retail	14	\$8.76
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>\$12.26</b>

**83% of 2012 graduates found jobs & most of the rest continued their education at a college or university. Comparing sectors, the average hourly wage was \$12.26.**

## The English Center recognized for 2012 Promising Practice: Beat the Banker Money Management Competition

CASAS—Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System—recognizes outstanding performance of agencies and schools that receive WIA Title II funding. The English Center has consistently received “promising practice” awards for its innovative curriculum. In 2012, the Center was again recognized and instructor Julia McGurk had the opportunity to talk about the winning project. Julia describes the Promising Practice “The Money Management Competition”. This Promising Practice was designed to incorporate financial literacy education so that it was relevant to a student’s life outside of the classroom.

<http://www.casas.org/training-and-support/casas-peer-communities/california-accountability/pp/el-civics/2012/09/28/money-management>

**Promising Practice:** The “Beat the Banker” Money Management Competition successfully incorporates EL Civics lessons into all aspects of the classroom experience in a creative and interesting way. Students receive a classroom “paycheck” every other week, and are expected to manage it just as they would their personal budgets.

## The iBTOEFL Testing Center, a Community Resource

**T**he 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 ex-
- ◆ Students and workers applying for visas
- ◆ Internationally-trained healthcare professionals needing to qualify for licensure

*Between July 2012 and January 2013, 782 people came to the English Center to take the iBTOEFL. The revenue from this helps to maintain the Center’s technology programming for all students.*

- ◆ its
- ◆ Scholarship and certification candidates
- ◆ English-language learners who want to track their progress
- ◆ Students and workers applying for visas



## The Healthcare Career Pathways Project Helps International Healthcare Professionals

**A** week after his arrival in the US on March 2012, Julio Tamayo, an experienced epidemiologist trained in Cuba, walked into the office of the Healthcare Career Pathways project for help with the long list of needs that are typical of a new immigrants – lack of adequate English, employment, and financial resources. The same month, the HCP project addressed his immediate need with an educational plan that consisted of intensive English classes, technology training and career preparation by enrolling him in the Career Readiness Program.

At the same time that he was learning English, the counselors at the English Center helped secure funding in the WIA program to support his continued training and assisted him with employment services through the Center's one-stop career office. Although he was placed at Level 1, Julio made rapid improvement in his English and was a successful student.

Fortunately, Julio came to us with the equivalent of an MD in the US, with over 20 years of experience as an epidemiologist in Cuba, where he ran primary care clinics and was the director of an infectious disease clinic in the city of Santiago. His job was to train residents and epidemiologists and he was in charge of the HIV clinic in Santiago.

In January 2013, Julio became employed at the San Francisco Aids Foundation and later, he was offered full-time professional employment as the Health Navigator for the Latino program earning

\$60.00 per hour. Today, Julio raves about his experience at the English Center, indicating that the Career preparation and the interview material that he learned in one of his classes was instrumental in landing him the job.



*"In the short time that I have been here, I have learned so much, especially in the career classes. The Career classes really helped me. I felt very successful in my interview yesterday with 3 people interviewing me at the same time in English. Thank you, English Center", Julio Tamayo Lopez*

Since the inception of the program in 2009, the Healthcare Careers Project has provided services to 334 international medical professionals.

In 2012, 118 new HCP applicants were assessed for their language proficiency and readiness for HCP, 61 created education plans, 60 worked on implementing their plans including 29 who were placed into employment.

Over a period of three years, the program served doctors, nurses, dentists, clinical lab scientists, pharmacists, and other health professionals

from many different countries. HCP provided services to many nurses like Pratima Shrestha & Ratchada On-At, who obtained a bachelors'

degree in Nursing in their home countries and in 2012 obtained U.S. Nursing licenses.

During the first three years of HCP, 31 clients have obtained U.S. licenses in their original professions. This is a significant achievement, as re-licensing is often a multi-year process involving many steps such as obtaining and evaluating records, addressing educational and clinical training gaps, improving English and U.S. healthcare communication skills, and passing licensing tests.

# The English Center

**By Jian Di Liang, Oakland Voices Author**



Jian Di Liang, pictured in the center front

Being in the United States for two and a half years, my happiest time was the period studying at the English Center – a non-profit organization that helps new immigrants, refugees, and international students improve English skills and find jobs.

To me, the Center was like a small society. I met people from all over the world and made friends with them. We not only studied about the American culture, but learned from each other as well. We were not afraid to make any grammar mistakes or use any body language because we understood what we were trying to say to each other.

The classes are very intensive and students have 4.5-hour classes per day. Class schedules are flexible in the morning, afternoon and evening. Having classes with the same people every day builds up much more conversant friendships. The teachers are really helpful and patient. We feel comfortable making friends with them, and we go out with them as well. We have class field trips once in a while. If students need help, there is one-on-one tutoring after class.

Since I was new to the country, I did not have any working experiences. The Center introduced me to the Port of Oakland and got me a volunteer opportunity there. The volunteering experience helped me so much later in my career.

I was also an intern for the development department. We organized social activities such as picnics for students, alumni, staff, friends and families. We had so much fun playing games together.

The Center helps students finding jobs successfully. We all moved along after graduating from the English Center, either to work, go to college or do both.

I really appreciate the help from the English Center. I could not be any happier with my opportunity to study there.

## About Jian Di Liang

Jian Di Liang (Charlotte) is from China. She is enthusiastic, friendly and outgoing. Meeting new people and traveling are her biggest interests

# STUDENT VOICES

## A Student Appreciates his English Center Instructor

One of our recent graduates responded to our instructor, **Janice Tolman**, who had led her writing class in a joint research project. She asked the graduates of her class for permission to include their papers for publication in the TESOL Archive. The following emailed permission from **Jaber Aljaeed**, on the left in the photo below, provides a sense of how appreciative students can be for a wonderful instructor.

*Dear Ms. Tolman,*

*I am sorry I was stuck in New York City for the last couple of days because of the storm NEMO, I made it home just last night which was a trip that took 9 hours from New York City to my place. We got hit by a nasty blizzard storm and we are still recovering.*

*I am sorry I have been out of touch for a while, I have been really busy with school. Now I live in Hamden, CT. I go to the University of New Haven, and trying to get my MS in Industrial Engineering. I came back to the U.S. in September 2012, that's when I started my school life. I am now in my second trimester and studying really hard for my mid-terms next week.*

*I am really grateful that I had the honor of being your student. My English skills are far superior to my international peers at school, and I thank you for that. I'm still trying to improve my English as much as I can, by reading high level books and learning new words everyday. My Saudi friends always ask me to revise their papers and essays for grammatical errors that they might have.*

*About the research paper, you are right, this is really good news. I am happy that I have been a part of the amazing team that conducted the research, and I am gladly giving you my signature at the bottom of this letter. Even if you need a written signature, you just tell me.*

*Enough about me, how are you doing ? Are you still teaching at the English Center? How is life treating you ?*

*Sincerely,*

*Jaber (The Saudi cool guy)*



## Games Night Pairs Students & Sungevity Guests



On April 1st, English Center Student Ambassadors and fellow students hosted a Games Night for alums and guests from our neighbor at 66 Franklin, Sungevity. Everyone especially enjoyed Monopoly and learning Go from Linden Chiu and Jan Chan of the Bay Area Go Players Association. Some decided in favor of Salsa dancing while others just socialized, learning about each other and the fascinating cultures the students represent. The photo on the left shows James Masi, Facilities and Sustainability Manager for Sungevity, studying a basket that Almaz Dirar has brought from Ethiopia.

Instructors Ruth Crossman & Janice Tolman who helped organize Games Night and the Ambassadors are very excited about planning their next event—a Dance Party!

## International Student Profile: Nouf Algahany

Ashley Richards, Intl Student Advisor

**N**ouf Algahany has had some challenges during her course of study with us. Being far from home and family is difficult for most people, however, being in a rigorous academic program on a limited budget in the Bay Area provides some extra challenges. Despite these circumstances, Nouf has risen to the occasion and succeeded in accomplishing the goals she set forth at the beginning of her time here. She will be completing her program here soon and going on to graduate school and she has had an incredible journey.

She started in our Basic 2 level and has progressed with good grades up through our program and is now in our Level 5 class.

She has traveled to many exciting places in the beautiful Bay Area such as Ano Nuevo to catch the elephant seals on their migratory journey camped out in droves on the beach. She has stayed on a farm in San Gregorio right on the Pacific Coast Highway.

She collected fresh eggs and rode a pony! And she has enjoyed seeing parts of San Francisco that are well kept secrets by locals like The Wave Organ in the Marina district.

She has enjoyed developing a nice friendship with her tutor. And she has made many friends during her time at The English Center.

Nouf is now busy applying to graduate programs and researching other areas of the United States. We will be sad to see her go but know that her journey is only half way over.

Nouf's educational goal is an MA degree in Journalism. This will support her career goal of returning to Saudi Arabia to work as a Professor in the University system in her field and to continue working as a journalist at *Almadina Newspaper*.



Nouf and her brother, Ahmed Aljohany, preparing to try kayaking!

# Djibrine Mainassara- My Story

Below is the text of Djibrine Mainassara's speech at the English Center's 35th Anniversary Celebration in May, 2012:

*I came from Niger, West Africa in August 2011 to rebuild my career here in Oakland where my wife lives. I have a non-profit management background for more than 10 years, focusing in micro-finance and communication. In this transition, the EC program plays an unexpected critical role.*

*I decided to immigrate in the US in September 2010. Seven months later, I got my Green Card. My flight of Royal Air Morocco arrived at 6:45 PM August 5 at JFK Airport. I have visited my country of adoption briefly two times in 2009 and 2010, but for the first time, I felt this flight was different. I was amazed and impressed. I realized how much I miss the skills needed to read my surrounds and drive my self. Fortunately, my wife was here as usual to welcome me! I also realized how much I need to have a comprehensive and intensive English program. After a while searching on Internet, it comes out that the EC program interest me more. A friend connected my wife for more details (I can't, my English was so poor...) and finally I decided that the EC has the ESL program I need.*



*I attended classes in writing, reading, listening, grammar, vocabulary, computer, community English, business communication and career classes from August 29, and 2011 to April 27, 2012. For eight months the EC*

*offer me intensive English classes and more: internship positions, customer skills and a lot of friends. Meantime I volunteer to assist the Outreach Department, the Business Manager and Development Department.*

*I paid for only my first 8 weeks classes of Fall A, worked in exchange with classes for the 8 other weeks of Fall B and for Spring session the EC staff supported me to access to WIA fund.*

*That strengthened my confident to drive into the city and at the US workplaces. I got English skills and got hired May 7, 2012 to start my first survival job. A new hope comes to me!*

*Thank you!*

**We are happy to report that Djibrine is now working in his field, having accepted employment as a program administrator upon completing an internship with Pan-gaea Global AIDS Foundation in 2012. It took him less than a year s to move from unemployed newcomer to resuming professional in the highly competitive San Francisco Bay Area. Congratulations, Djibrine!**

## Our Student Body Reflects the World

The students enrolled in 2011-12  
were the largest and most diverse group ever!  
There were **328** students from **44** different countries!

Africa		
Algeria	12	3.7%
Chad	2	0.6%
Djibouti	1	0.3%
Egypt	2	0.6%
Eritrea	24	7.3%
Ethiopia	28	8.5%
Niger	1	0.3%
Nigeria	1	0.3%
Senegal	1	0.3%
<i>Total Africa:</i>	72	22.0%

Asia, East		
Burma	19	5.8%
Cambodia	3	0.9%
China	45	13.7%
Malaysia	2	0.6%
Mongolia	19	5.8%
Philippines	5	1.5%
Thailand	2	0.6%
Vietnam	6	1.8%
<i>Total East Asia:</i>	101	30.8%

Asia, South & Central		
Bhutan	5	1.5%
India	2	0.6%
Nepal	6	1.8%
Sri Lanka	8	2.4%
Tibet	1	0.3%
Uzbekistan	1	0.3%
<i>Total So &amp; Cen Asia:</i>	23	7.0%

Americas		
Brazil	2	0.6%
Colombia	5	1.5%
Cuba	2	0.6%
Dom. Republic	1	0.3%
El Salvador	19	5.8%
Guatemala	14	4.3%
Haiti	1	0.3%
Mexico	30	9.1%
Nicaragua	6	1.8%
Peru	5	1.5%
USA	2	0.6%
Venezuela	1	0.3%

Total Enrollment	328
Number of Countries	44



Europe		
Georgia		
Macedonia	1	0.3%
Russia	5	1.5%
Ukraine	3	0.9%
<i>Total Europe:</i>	10	3.0%

Middle East		
Iran		
Iraq	6	1.8%
Saudi Arabia	13	4.0%
Syria	1	0.3%
Yemen	3	0.9%
<i>Total Middle East:</i>	33	10.1%

*Total Americas:* 88 26.8%

## Come study with us!

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