



NEWS

Spring 2015

New Programs for New Immigrants

John Tang Introduces the "Career - IT" Executive Director of the English Center

The IT in "Career- IT" refers to information technology. Our goal is to train limited English speaking immigrants and refugees for a job as an A+ certified desktop support technician. Our goal is to place participants into jobs with a starting wage of \$20.00 an hour. To get there, we will prepare newly arrived immigrants for the CompTIA A+ certification exam.

The English Center won't be working alone on the Career-IT training program. We will be partnering with the Stride Center, an agency with a reputation of excellence in vocational training.

The Stride Center is particularly successful in preparing students for CompTIA A+ exam. It is an honor for the English Center to be involved with the Stride Center, and we look forward to the success of our joint program, Career-IT.

Karla David Discusses Financial Aid for College Grads Admissions and Outreach Coordinator, International Student Advisor

The English Center is now enrolling for Summer and Fall sessions. We are proud to announce that we may be able to serve more clients.

The English Center was approved to be a part of a Pell Grant financial aid experiment. This will enable some students who have Bachelor's degrees from outside the US to apply for Pell Grants. As most of you know, the Pell Grant has only been offered to those who earned a high school diploma or an Associate's Degree outside the US. With this new program, that will change. Students with Bachelor's degrees may be able to apply for financial aid. If successful, this program will bring more qualified students who will benefit the English Center community significantly.

Contact Karla David for information about these programs: admissions@englishcenter.edu

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“To accomplish my dream job, I can thank the English Center. My education has taught me how to respect other cultures, religions, and races. This gives me strength to become an interpreter for the Mam Maya community.”
 - Carlos Mendoza

“Here I am gaining international experience, which is very important for my future profession.”
 -Phyu Win



The English Center

Social Media: Fun and Talent



Phyu Win and Paw Eh Gay check for the daily clue during the Facebook Scavenger Hunt. The prizes are excellent, almost new computers, thanks to our Executive Director.

Movie Making at the English Center

Rebecca Wee, Director of Admissions and Outreach and English Center student Dariush Nehdaran spent weeks filming and editing. Dariush brought technical knowledge and professional equipment. Rebecca learned to direct and guide the editing process. The results are excellent, as you can see.

Dariush Nehdaran is an official member of the Iranian Photographer's Society. He studied Painting at Elm & Farhang University in Tehran. Read more about his work at Emergeast.



For successful participation in the Facebook Scavenger Hunt, students received certificates for their prize computers at the Spring 2015 Promotion Ceremony.

Social Media Takes Off

Students participated in a social media research project. They found that 91% of all students use Facebook. In fact, the English Center Facebook page enjoys over 1100 likes. Instagram is a growing interest. LinkedIn is an area of growth. Watch for an increase in social media activities. The Facebook Scavenger Hunt involved students for more than a week. They followed clues every day, such as find a pair of white socks, find a 1971 penny, help students sign-up for Facebook, help new students enroll, and put up English Center fliers in your neighborhood.

Volunteers Make a Difference

The English Center is home to about 20 volunteers who give nearly 200 hours a month to our students. They help teachers in the classroom and tutor students individually. To learn more about our volunteer program, contact Janice Tolman, Volunteer Coordinator, programs1@englishcenter.edu

Lisbeth Mardona, right, tutored Phyu Win every Wednesday. Lisbeth says that Phyu is "more than just another student I teach, but a dear friend." Lisbeth recently graduated from UC Berkeley with degrees in Biology and Chinese Studies.



Lisbeth Mardona Volunteer and Future ESL Teacher

Last November, Lisbeth Mardona discovered the English Center while looking for a place to complete the practicum for her TEFL certification course. Since then, she has been a TA for April Shandor's Reading and Writing class and Julia Tran's Speaking and Listening class. "They're both amazing teachers who really enjoy what they do," she says, "and I've learned so much about teaching by helping and even just watching them conduct class. This is on top of all their useful feedback." She has learned a different perspective through her weekly tutoring sessions with Phyu Win.

Lisbeth has also participated in several English Center events. She and a group of students explored Oakland Chinatown's Lunar New Year Bazaar, enjoying the performances and browsing the various stalls. Then she served as one of the mock interviewers for the Career interview event. She says, "One of the great things about the English Center is that it doesn't just teach students English but really strives to integrate them into the American community. It was really cool to play a part in that process."

For Lisbeth, volunteering at the English Center has been nothing short of wonderful. "I've gained a lot of self-confidence and knowledge about teaching during my short time here," she says. "But more than that, I've built connections and forged friendships with people from all over the world, and that is perhaps the greatest thing about the world of teaching English as a second language."

Alumni Serve on Career Panel



Rita Wilson (2011), Ragheed Ghalib Abdulamir (2011),
Angelica Vera (2000), and Sonia Rios Petri (2010)

Did you study at the English Center? To serve on a future career panel, contact Eric Bellis, Career Education Coordinator, careered@englishcenter.edu.

Cara Lazarus says, "Welcome Back!"

Career Instructor

Former students returned to the English Center to participate in the Career Panel Discussion. These English Center alums explained how their time at the English Center prepared them for the work world.

Rita Wilson, from the Ivory Coast, completed level 4 after four semesters, then worked as the receptionist at the English Center. Currently, Rita works for Zara Apparel in San Francisco and is studying for a degree in Public Health. She counseled students to converse with more English speakers and not to be afraid to make mistakes, for every mistake is a learning experience.

Ragheed Ghalib Abdulamir, from Iraq, is pursuing a Ph.D. in psychology at the California Institute for Integral Studies while working part-time. He advised students to celebrate small successes and to be kind to themselves as they learn English.

English Center Registrar **Angelica Vera** also got her start at the English Center and never left! She completed her program in 2000 and began working as a receptionist for the English Center, finally advancing to her current job as Registrar.

Sonia Rios Petri, from Brazil, spoke about her part-time job working on-line for Google, and encouraged students to apply for the same position. She is using her international experience to help Google be more global.

Career student **Karla Lopez** said, "I enjoyed the panel. I learned about people who were where I am now." **Gertrude Metsiegoum** commented, "Listening to Rita made me feel confident."

Our alums have a special power in our students' lives because of their confidence. These are immigrants who have already met major challenges and are now entering the workforce.

Community English Classes Study Nutrition



Instructor Julia Tran teaches about the Nutrition Facts Label. Comparing nutrition facts and writing letters to nutrition-related agencies were the assessment tasks. This spring, students also learned to talk with their doctors about symptoms.

Leon Davis of the HOPE Collaborative came as a guest speaker with his colleague Anita Wong. They helped us understand health disparities in Oakland due to unequal access to healthy food.



Karla Lopez

Community English Student, Future Health Professional

All of us ask, "How can I have good health?" The most important thing is to think of balancing all the food we eat. You can eat everything, but the best way to have a good balance is eating more vegetables and fruits. Learn how much food is recommended from each food group; make sure nothing is missing, such as the vitamins, proteins, and all the good things your body need to be health. We should also read the nutrition facts labels and compare the calories and ingredients of the foods we buy. Processed food has too much sugar, salt, and fat. Processed foods make your body feel tired without energy. Remember good nutrition can prevent many diseases such as heart problems, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, and high blood pressure. In addition, we must combine good nutrition with exercise every day; nutritionists recommend 30 minutes of exercise every day to have good health. Another thing, don't forget to eat your breakfast every day because it gives you the energy to start a good day. Finally, enjoy good food and try to make good recipes to have good health; remember, "You are what you eat."

Dream Job Writing Competition



Carlos Mendoza, Yenibel Lopez (Level 4 winner), Suji Moon, Phyu Win (Level 3 winner), and Selam Semereab are among the finalists. Not shown are Efi Eylor and Mohammad Farhan (Level 2 winner). Visit on Facebook to read all their stories.

All the Dream Jobs Thrilled the Judges

Eighteen students submitted stories about their dream jobs. The dreams involve futures in law, journalism, translation, design, photography, architecture, acting, computer science, medicine, and race car driving. We are impressed by the strength of their commitments, and we hope they find the paths to these professions. Visit us on Facebook to read all their stories.

Suji Moon

Dream Job: Concept Artist

People have asked me many times why I am here in America. I came to America to achieve my dream job. I've been drawing and designing for so long that I don't even remember when I started. Art is a big part of me, my life and passion. I especially love to design characters,



Design by Suji Moon

costumes and places. I also like to put some story in it. I think it's because I've grown up watching countless movies since I was a little kid. When I was 16 years old, I realized everything I was doing naturally had a title. It's called concept art designs that are made for a movie in the very beginning of the film production. Since I realized there's a job like that, I couldn't stop imagining me doing it. In America, there are a lot of decent schools and companies for that. This is the reason why I came here, and yes, I still want to be a concept artist and I'll be the one someday soon.

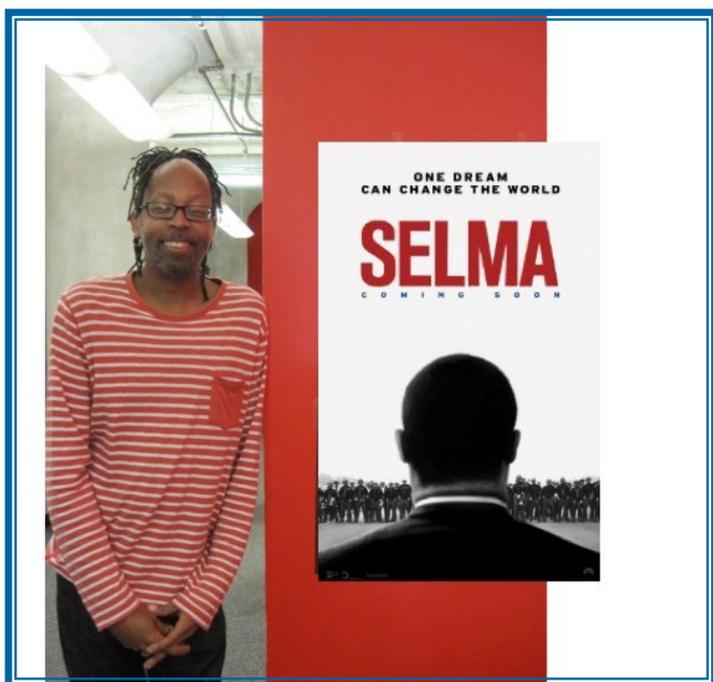
Suji Moon studied at Academy of Art University in San Francisco. To see more of Moon's designs, visit her Facebook page or Pinterest.

Teacher Trivia Quiz

1. Which teacher always has **pink** or **purple** hair?
2. Who began teaching English in **1975**?
3. Who has a **twin** sister?

Read to the end of the newsletter to check your answers!

English Center Culture



Instructor Geo Smith gave students a special screening of the movie *Selma*. He provided more insights into the history of the Civil Rights movement as we watched.

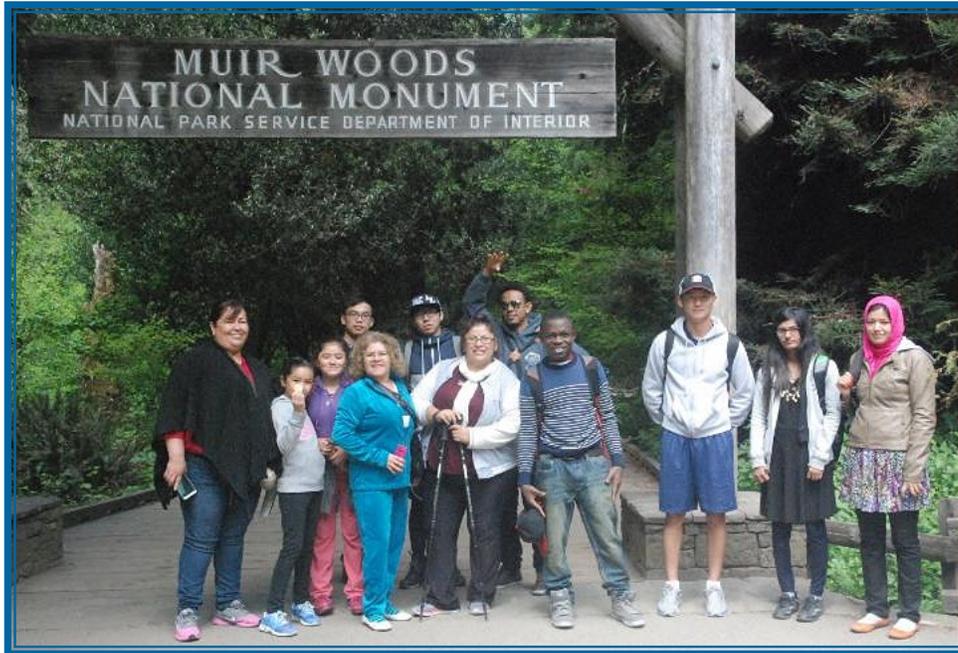


Students from Ethiopia and Eritrea hosted a party with healthy traditional food.



Students toured inside the U.S.S. Potomac. F.D.R.'s "Floating White House" is docked at Jack London Square. Thanks go to volunteer Marti Burchell for making this tour possible.

Student Activities



April Shandor

International Student Activities Coordinator

The spring marked the return of an exciting activities program at the English Center. The program is designed to give the English Center's international students a chance to get involved in many local Bay Area activities, yet all students and their family members and friends are invited to join. This spring we visited these iconic locations:

- ◆ Ferry to San Francisco and walk on Fisherman's Wharf
- ◆ Visit Chinatown for the Lunar New Year Festival
- ◆ Hike and picnic in Tilden Park, Berkeley
- ◆ Muir Woods National Monument to see the tallest trees on earth

We also took trips to encourage international students on their academic paths. We had guided tours of two local universities:

- ◆ Notre Dame de Namur University
- ◆ San Francisco State University

The students learned what it is like to study at a university in California and aspire to be accepted into their favorite programs.

Spring 2015 Promotion Ceremony

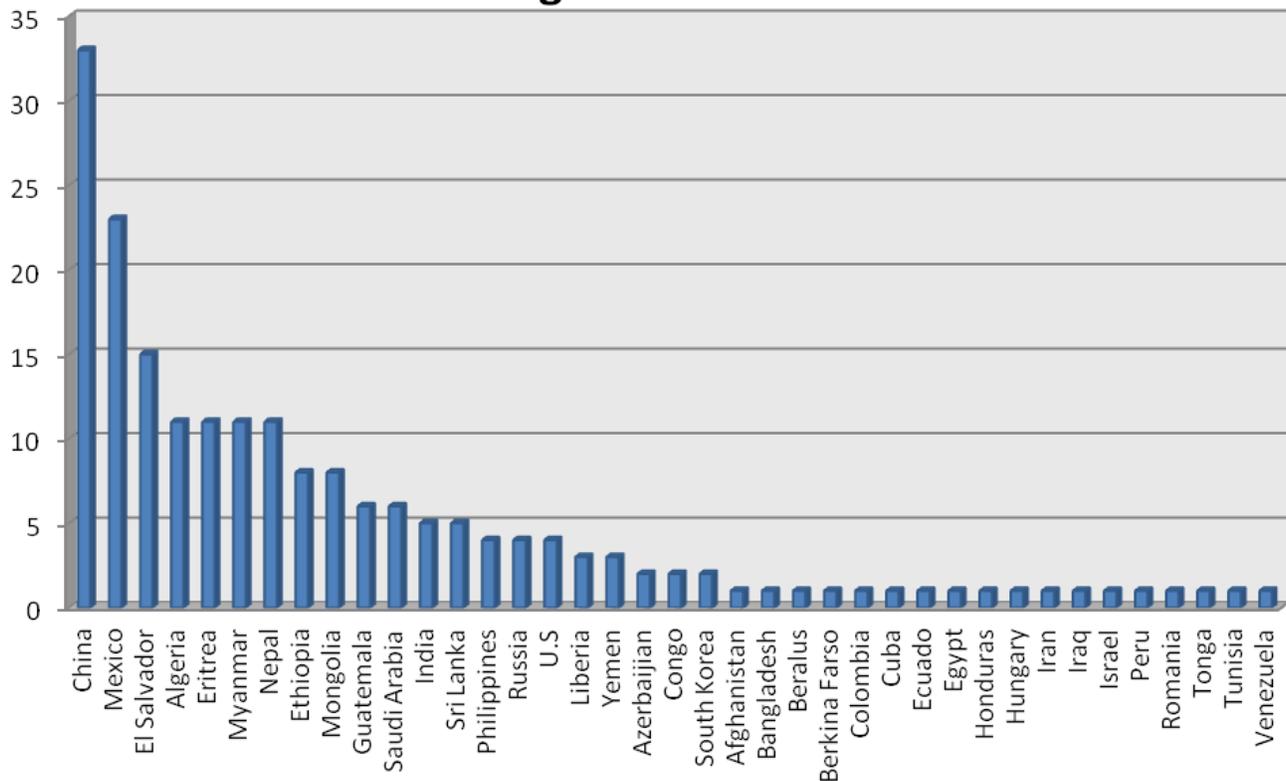


Tarana Karimova, Valedictorian, thanked the English Center for encouraging her. She feels ready for a career in business and life in America. Teacher Hazel Crawford listens with admiration.



Kathy Chao Rothenburg, Executive Director of Lao Family Community Development, speaks five languages. She asked students to focus on learning English: "This is a culture that values communication."

National Origins of New Students in 2014



Families: New Babies and Big Brothers



Ganchimeg Delger and Barsbold Ganbaatar had their first baby. Temuulen Barsbold was born on February 25, 2015. Congratulations!



"It's a girl!" Students had a baby shower for their classmate Zoljargal Chuluunbaatar. They brought gifts and party games.



Brothers from Mongolia and Liberia study together: Byambadorj Batmunkh, Martin Torbor, Namjildorj Batmunkh, and Bill Torbor.



Sufean Al-gerani (2014) inspired his brother Hakam to travel from their home in Saudi Arabia to enroll at the English Center.

Answers to the Teacher Trivia Quiz:

1. **Laura Marsh** always has **pink** or **purple** hair.
2. **Eric Bellis** started teaching English in **1975**.
3. **Julia Tran** has a **twin** sister.

Wow! You made it to the end of our Spring 2015 newsletter!

Come join us!

Avenir Meilleur	مستقبل افضل	Un Mejor Futuro
更美好的未来	Better Future	더 나은 미래
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The English Center is nonprofit, postsecondary, private, vocational intensive English program serving students since 1977.