

## Meet the *NEW* English Center!

**T**he Big News of the year is our move from the Mills campus to a spectacular new location in the center of the San Francisco Bay Area—Jack London Square!

After more than 30 years, we wanted more space and more opportunities for our students. We've chosen this beautiful new location because of its excellent facilities for our classes and labs and its accessibility to the entire Bay Area via BART, ferry and bus. This location is within walking distance of City Hall, the Oakland Museum, and large and small businesses and restaurants, so we will be able to offer many different service learning opportunities in addition to our classes. For international students interested in business, government, the non-profit sector or the arts, there are many internship possibilities.



Our new neighbors include the Port of Oakland and boutique hotelier Joie de Vivre as well as the soon-to-open Public Market, a magnet for the Bay Area's Slow Food movement.

The English Center is still helping students prepare for higher education at our local colleges and universities, but now our students can also combine their

English language studies with practical career building through our on-site Career Center.

We invite you to join the New English Center, now in the heart of the Jack London Square, the Bay Area's "newest center of gravity for culture, cuisine, and commerce."



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**That's us on the top floor, facing the water at our new location in Oakland's Jack London Square!**

*When I came to ECIW my self esteem was on the floor. Many people looked down on me because I am a single mother, but at ECIW, people saw me with admiration because I was working, studying and taking care of my son alone. Now I feel like I can go to college and be anything I want to be...*

## Local Foundations Support the English Center's Career Advancement Program

**W**hat do new Americans need in order to begin to contribute their talents to their new home country? Whether coming with years of education and work experience or not, a recent arrival needs strong English language skills, essential computer applications skills and knowledge of the job search process and U.S. workplace culture.

The Career Advancement Program (CAP) provides this training in an intensive model of instruction—sometimes called an ‘immersion’ experience— so that the highly motivated student can prepare as quickly as possible to enter or re-enter a profession.

Recognizing the unique value of CAP, The **Y & H Soda Foundation** and **Foundation** help fund instruction and **Haas Fund** help working students by low and moderate income applicants.



local foundations have offered support. the **van Löben Sels/RembeRock** counseling services; the **Walter & Elise** supporting a financial aid program for

Studying 22+ hours each week in class and doing several hours of homework each night, the typical CAP student can advance from beginner to intermediate level skills in 16 weeks. The intermediate level student can become an advanced level student in another 16 weeks, ready to enter the workforce and/or to begin classes at the local community college.

Part-time study is popular with current employees needing to master specific skills such as presentation and negotiation in the business environment.

**WALTER & ELISE HAAS FUND**

*van Löben Sels/RembeRock*  
FOUNDATION

Ninety-three percent of the English Center's CAP 2007 graduates found jobs or continued their education at a higher education institution. The average hourly wage for 2007 graduates was \$13.58 per hour, which was 10 percent higher than the average in 2006.

## Introducing the English Center One-Stop Career Center

**Nancy Taylor, Career Center Placement Counselor**  
**Angelica Garcia, Career Placement Assistant**

The EC One-Stop helps students realize their career goals in a number of ways. Many students are not aware of the cultural intricacies of job hunting. The One-Stop provides services that teach students how to find a job step-by-step. In the career classes, for example, students learn how to fill out employment applications, write cover letters, resumes and references, prepare them for job interviews. The EC One-Stop also helps students achieve personal goals by providing Internships where students can learn and practice their English skills and/or gain work

experience. In conjunction with their career classes, the EC-One Stop provides career counseling. These services include giving students a career assessment that identifies students' career and personal interests. Students can review their results and discover which careers they may find interesting and rewarding. Through instruction, coun-



Shu Hui Zhao practices her office skills at the Port's Office of Audit Services

selling and follow-up from instructors and the EC One-Stop staff, students have the opportunity to prepare for the English speaking workplace while learning the career and technology skills they require in their job search.

One of ECIW's alums, **Zula Sunnatcheva**, recently earned her Medical Assistant certificate from Merritt College. "Before I came to

## ...a Resource for Students and Alums!

ECIW, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. But after taking the Level 3 career class, I realized I wanted to work in the medical field. After I graduated from ECIW, I enrolled in the Medical Assistant program at Merritt College. When I first entered the program, I was overwhelmed by English terminology and vocabulary. But, because of the study habits I learned at

"Later that week I applied for two jobs, and was invited to two interviews. As luck would have it, both employers wanted to hire me."

ECIW, I overcame my fears through studying and completed the program. After I graduated, I needed to get a job so I pulled out my resume and realized it needed to be updated. I made an appointment with the EC One-Stop and the staff helped me write a cover letter and edit my resume. They also help me prepare for an interview. Later

that week I applied for two jobs, and was invited to two interviews. As luck would have it, both employers wanted to hire me. I was so thrilled! Without the help of ECIW, I don't think I would have the opportunities I have now." **Yuka Wakabayashi** is from Japan and came to ECIW to study English. Yuka told the EC One-Stop staff it was her dream to work at an international airport and speak both English and Japanese. Yuka admitted that she was

## For International Students and Immigrants!

afraid to speak English and needed an internship where she could practice without feeling pressured or judged. When asked if she would like to intern at a preschool, Yuka was a little skeptical. "I didn't really know very much about children, but when the staff at the EC One-Stop suggested working with children would help me practice English, I reluctantly agreed. Of her experience at Joe and Bernice's Pre-

school, Yuka reported, "At first I didn't know how to talk to the children, but they taught me how. They wanted me read to them and play games that required me to use English. When it was time for me to go back to Japan, the children told me that they didn't want me to leave because 'they needed me.' I was so touched and so sad to



Students enjoy interning at the Mills College Children's School

leave them." Yuka told her career counselor later that her internship experience was one of the best experiences she ever had. She made new friends and learned to speak English in a way that she would not have learned in the classroom.

# Different Communities: One Voice

## Community Discussion Forum

Hosted by The English Center, Jack London Square, Oakland  
Co-Sponsored by League of Women Voters of Oakland

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, more than 100 people—new voters, community activists, media representatives, English Center students and other interested guests—attended a Community Discussion Forum at the English Center’s new location in Jack London Square. Special guests included English Center



League of Women Voters talked about the historical struggle to secure voting rights for all citizens; Svetlana Rishina, an English Center graduate of ten years ago, relayed her personal journey as a refugee from Uzbekistan to the U.S., the

founders Anne Foreman, JoAnne Elias and Elizabeth Brady.

The event was co-sponsored by the local public television network KQED and the League of Women Voters and explored the questions of why we vote and why we don’t vote, why civic engagement is necessary to encourage voters and how English proficiency pro-

vides access to the political process.

“My picture was everywhere,” Kovida said. “I realized, if I’m arrested by the government, I have no chance for life. So I decided, myself, to leave my country.”

The evening began with a traditional dance performance by two Nepalese dancers, Amisha and Mansha, whose dance expressed the joy

of returning home. Panelist Lisa Frederiksen Bohannon from the



experience of finding her voice again at the English Center and resuming her career as a lawyer; and Kovida U., a 2008 English Center student, described his recent experience as a young monk, finding the courage to speak out against the human rights abuse in Burma, then fleeing for his life. He also talked about

the difficulties of maintaining his identity as a Buddhist monk in his current circumstances. The audience was spell-bound by these dramatic stories which illustrated the importance of ‘voice’ at critical times in U.S. history, in the global struggle for human rights, and in each person’s own story.

## English Center Alum Martha Cuevas!

Martha had studied accounting in Mexico, but could only find work as a waitress in California. Wanting to use her professional skills, she started English Center classes in January 2004. By summer, her language skills were strong enough for her to begin volunteering at the English Center. Though she still kept her waitress position, after class she would volunteer in the Financial Aid office,

where her help was much appreciated by the Financial Aid Officer, Sima. When it came time for Martha to begin her job search, she contacted Sima and asked permission to use her as a reference. Of course, Sima was happy to help such a good worker find a new career



position. Today, after working as a teller for Bank of America for just six months, Martha is now a Teller Operations Specialist. On a recent visit to the English Center, she gave a presentation to students and staff about Bank of America’s services and answered questions about her own career path and aspirations. Martha Cuevas (nee Salcedo) is a great role model for English

## The English Center's Career Advancement Program Curriculum wins State-wide and National Promising Practices Recognition!

The English Center received 'Best Practices with Student Success and Retention' recognition and an award from CASAS at their Summer Institute, July 2008. The English Center receives a grant from the California Department of Education for English Literacy and Civics (EL Civics). This grant is used for the Community English classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Students learn about

- ◆ the American and Bay Area banking systems
- ◆ interacting with doctors and other medical professionals
- ◆ community resources in the SF Bay Area
- ◆ the USDA food pyramids and
- ◆ community parks and recreation facilities
- ◆ SF Bay area employers and their expectations

This is the second award The English Center has received from CASAS for Best Practices! Read about this year's award below!



**“The English Center — Outstanding WIA II Program Management and Student Outcomes**  
**Category: Accountability**

The English Center (ECIW) has taken great strides to provide abundant resources for both instructors and students involved in the program. The success of ECIW is anchored by small class sizes, intensive English instruction, and understanding of world cultures. The agency develops comprehensive curriculum bind-

ers for EL Civics and English classes, and provides teacher training for curriculum and assessment. ECIW developed an extensive evaluation checklist that is used for each EL Civics Additional Assessment, which supports standardized delivery of their assessments across all levels.

This spring, 66 of 70 students passed the Additional Assessments for a 94 percent success rate. To support learner persistence the Center employs a staff member to focus solely on attendance and student issues. When students have work or family conflicts, they can go to this staff person for assistance. ECIW's managed enrollment ensures learner persistence. Evaluation of enrollment rates show that most of ECIW's students stay in the program for more than 44 weeks. The English Center's comprehensive and personal approach shows outstanding management of its WIA Title II Program.”

### The Career Advancement Program is a Model for English Language Acquisition

**T**he English Center's Career Advancement Program has again been recognized as one of the most effective models for helping newcomers to learn English, find employment and integrate into U.S. society as quickly as possible.

*Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) provides comprehensive information on the needs of the world's growing and increasingly diverse immigrant and refugee populations. In the recent GCIR toolkit, ECIW is one of three organizations identified nationally as offering model programs of language acquisition. Read about it at [http://www.gcir.org/system/files/lang\\_acquisition.pdf](http://www.gcir.org/system/files/lang_acquisition.pdf), page 6.*

# English Center Students Move Beyond Classroom Practice

## Community English Class Goes on Field Trips

### The Trip along the Port of Oakland

by Mark Wu and Yuen-big Cheung

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, most of the students went to the Port of Oakland. We boarded a ferry boat at the ferry which is very close to the English Center. We walked for about 10 minutes to get there.

Surprise! the tickets were free for us. So we had fun from 11:30am,



"Having a Great Time! Wish you were here!"

when the boat departed. The boat has three floors, from which we could have a great view of the Port.

First thing that came into our eyes were the giant cranes, containers and huge ships. It was really a close look at them. The next thing was much more interesting. We passed by the Middle Harbor Shoreline Park which has signs about the Port's

History. And then the ferry boat drove to the Bay Bridge. From that stand point, the view of San Francisco is so beautiful with some clouds above it. It looked like a fairy land in the heaven. Anyway, we all liked this



## Intern Pema Lodoe Gets On-the-Job Training at the Port of Oakland

**I**nternships provide resume-building experience and opportunities to gain confidence in a supportive work environment.

Some of our students are getting valuable work experience by working as volunteer interns with the Port of Oakland. They volunteer for about three months and work an average of 10 hours a week in different departments like Social Responsibility (Pema Lodoe), Ground Transportation at Oakland International Airport (Pei Ting "Connie" Zhong) and the Office of Audit Services (Shu Hui

Zhao). Not only do they get a chance to put their English, Computer and Career lessons into practice in a real American workplace environment, but they also make contacts in the Oakland business community and gain references who may recommend them for future employment.



Interested students in Level 2 or 3 may contact Robert Beckley, Career Education at (510) 836-6700, ext. 112.

## My Journey, My Dream

by Gangchuk

I am a 27-year-old native of Tibet. I became a Buddhist monk when I was 8 years old because it is most Tibetan parents' dream for their sons. This is because monks are highly respected, as well as the most highly educated people in Tibet. The monastery had about 300 monks, including the students. I learned to read, chant, play musical instruments, and perform Buddhist ceremonies. As a student, I passed tests for chanting and prayer, and when I was about 17, I took my vows and became *getsul*, a young monk.

Life was good at the monastery until, one day, when the Chinese authorities took over my monastery, telling all the monks that we had to denounce our spiritual leader, His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, or else we would be imprisoned. I escaped the monastery, and as I was fleeing to Nepal, the Chinese authorities shot at me. My family told me the Chinese authorities would imprison, torture, and even kill me if they ever found me.



I was born in 1980 in Amdo province, in eastern Tibet. I have three sisters and one younger brother, my family raised horses, yaks, sheep, and goats distributed to us by the Chinese Government based on the number of people in the family. My family was nomadic, which means we moved depending on the season mainly moving between our summer location and our winter location. As a child, my family didn't live in a house; we lived in a traditional

Tibetan tent made of a yak's hair, which was large enough for the whole family. Each season, we used to move the house with us by horse. After I left Tibet, I have heard that my family has built a house for wintertime, and they still use the tent in summer.

My family is Buddhist, and I had always admired the monks when I visited monasteries with my family. As a child, I learned to pray with my parents in the morning and evening. We always set up an altar in our tent, even though we moved with the seasons. The altar had a photo of the Dalai Lama, deities, and important monks. I believe that his Holiness, the Dalai Lama, is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people. Even now that I'm in the U.S., I continue praying every morning and evening. I pray to the Dalai Lama that he may have a long life and that he may return to Tibet soon.



## Going Abroad to Follow a New Path

by Kanako Honda

“I want to study abroad!” I thought when I was a university student. Time went by. I saved money for seven years and then last year that dream came true finally. I have been here for almost 11 months. I not only learned English but also had a chance to make new friends all over the world and rethink my future plans.

I was not confident of my English at first and I was afraid of making mistakes when I used English. Over the months, I have improved my English both consciously and unconsciously. The classes were fun and enjoyable, and teachers were nice and patient so that I enjoyed learning English in the class. The teacher provided us good environment and the connection to use English between our real life and classroom. Moreover, some teachers took us outside of classroom, so I have good memories about class trips.

Sometimes, however, I was discouraged about my progress and I struggled to go forward. Confident of my improvement, the teachers encouraged me to keep using English and gave me proper advice about how to improve my English. Now my English is much better than before and I’m improving quickly. Daily, I feel more confident to use English.

There is a diversity of students at ECIW. We are different nationalities, ages, occupations and situations. Although we have different reasons to stay in the U.S, we have the same goal that “we want to handle English”. The variety of differences makes me more curious about these people. They gave me



Kanako leads the way on a weekend hike with classmates & ECIW staff.

different points of views. I learned a lot from them. They always encouraged me to study hard and reminded me of the importance of helping one another, anytime. I developed close relationships between friends by spending time together. We were like a family. When I had hard time, I was indebted to them for helping me to overcome my problems. It was necessary for me to make and have friends. I still keep in touch with them. Even though we were from different countries, I became best friends with them.

I have done many valuable things. For instance, I had experience about dormitory life, auditing a class at a local university and being a volunteer at a preschool. I had a chance to audit a class before enrolling in university. That one helped me a lot because

I was planning to go to university after finishing the English Center program. Even though I was only auditing this lecture, they cared about me and helped me a lot when I hesitated over the big differences in lecture style between the U.S. and Japan. In addition, I volunteered at a preschool. Working at preschool was one of my dreams when I was little. I spent precious time with children and their teachers. I played with little children and learned how to teach them to be well-behaved. At the same time, I observed the community around this area and learned things that we could not learn at school. These things inspired me to rethink my career plan.

I have had not only good times but also hard times since I came here. Staff and friends always help me or give me advice sincerely if I have a trouble. It feels like home. Through my experiences here, I noticed that I had had a narrow way of thinking and believed many stereotypes. However, I have learned more different ways of thinking and more different ways of looking at the world. These experiences enhanced my life, beyond just improving my English. I am becoming more open and international than I was, day by day.





## What does “Diversity” mean at the English Center?

The English Center student enrollment for academic year 2007-2008 is certainly one of the most diverse ever—231 students from 40+ different countries!

### East Asia

Burma  
Cambodia  
China  
Hong Kong  
Japan

Korea  
Thailand  
Tibet  
Vietnam

### Central and West

#### Asia

Iran  
Uzbekistan  
Mongolia  
Kazakhstan  
Afghanistan

#### Africa

Eritrea  
Ethiopia  
Yemen

Jordan  
Morocco  
Saudi Arabia  
Tanzania

### Europe

Belarus  
Moldova  
Ukraine  
Russia  
Bulgaria  
Poland

### The Americas

Brazil



Men & women, young & not so young, together

Mexico  
USA

Colombia  
Chile  
El Salvador

Cuba  
Nicaragua  
Honduras

Dominican Republic  
Argentina  
Costa Rica  
Ecuador



Guatemala  
Venezuela  
Peru

## What is it like to be a student at the English Center?

As a student at The English Center, you'll learn English and you will learn a lot about yourself! You'll learn to speak and write fluently and comfortably in English **and** you'll gain confidence to study and work in an American university or corporation.

In your classes, you'll meet other students from all around the world. Many sessions, we have students from as many continents as North and South and Central America, Europe,



A student making a presentation in the computer lab

Africa, and Asia. Because the class size is small (average 14 students), you will form friendships with your classmates and learn about their customs and culture. And, you will receive very personalized attention from the very professional and experienced teachers here at The English Center.

Several times each session there



Students at one of our famous class parties!

are class and school parties. You will learn about American holidays and taste foods from around the world. Often, your class will go on field trips to local museums and other interesting locations. Most important, you will have the chance to meet

people that you would never meet anywhere else—a Burmese monk, a teacher from Mexico, a dancer from Nepal, a lawyer from the Ukraine, a refugee from Eritrea.....

## English Center Director Marcy Jackson Wins Jefferson Award

This fall, The San Francisco Chronicle newspaper featured Marcy Jackson, our Center director, and winner of a **Jefferson Award** for making a difference in our community. The awards are administered by the American Institute for Public Service, a national foundation that honors community service. Bay Area residents profiled in The Chronicle are also featured on CBS5-TV and KCBS-AM, which are **Jefferson Award** media partners, along with The Chronicle.



## Teaching the Language of the American Dream

### An Interview with Jefferson Award Winner: Marcy Jackson



Sharon Chin,

Reporting  
KPIX Channel 5CBS

#### OAKLAND (CBS 5) —

"I would like to order chicken and Coke, please," Ru Chen tells the server at a busy Oakland cafe.

Ordering lunch in English is second nature for her now. But when she immigrated to the Bay Area from China three years ago, she struggled to adapt.

"I call my friends every night," she explains tearfully. "And they said, 'Ok, if you don't feel comfortable, come back.'"

She said [The English Center](#) changed her outlook.

"I need to learn English, I need to start my new life right away," she says.

Marcy Jackson co-founded The English Center for Women 31 years ago with four colleagues. At the time, she was teaching English to foreign students. "Women were underrepresented, so we thought, we were young and entrepreneurial, and thought, 'We could do something about this!'" Marcy says.

The English Center now teaches women and men, and trains new immigrants in reading, writing, American culture and job skills. It's outgrown its first home at Mills College.. and now holds classes at Oakland's Jack London Square.

Over the years, the English Center has taught five thousand students from more than 75 countries. Marcy says every year more than 80 percent of the graduates get jobs and many go on to college.

"I'm constantly surprised," says Marcy. "My own vision for what people can do is expanded."

Silvia San Miguel now works in the Oakland city administrator's office, linking new immigrants to city services. But when she arrived from Mexico in 1993, she felt paralyzed with fear.

"I just didn't want to go anywhere," Silvia says. "I didn't want anybody talking to me. Even on the phone. I didn't want to answer the phone because maybe someone spoke English. I didn't know what to say."

Silvia says the English Center made her feel like she wasn't alone. She explains, "We all share that feeling, you know, we want to learn, it's not as easy as we thought it would be. But we're all trying really hard and support each other."

Yelena Glikman barely spoke English when she arrived from Russia in 1989, but she credits Marcy's nonprofit for giving her the confidence to pursue her dream to open a Russian language school in Berkeley.

"It's happened. I never thought that it can happen like this," Yelena says. Marcy adds, "Giving someone the ability to see a future that'll benefit them and their families is very powerful. It's constantly inspiring."

**For equipping thousands of immigrants for their new life in America, this Jefferson Award in the Bay Area goes to Marcy Jackson.**

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## Come study with us. We're waiting for you!

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