

International Learning Center

ESL • Citizenship • Math • Computer Skills • Pre-school • Life Skills • Tutoring



Newsletter Fall 2009 • ILC Staff, Students and Preschoolers Celebrate Halloween

Fall Brings Guest Speakers and Family Nutrition Class



TRICK-OR-TREAT

Preschoolers go trick-or-treating at ILC's six ESL classrooms. Instructors Phan Sanford and Bao Her also took the kids and their parents to Retzlaff Pumpkin farm this year for hayrides and other fun.

In September, two guest speakers of interest to new and experienced drivers visited the school. **Molly Moua** talked to students about insurance, and a speaker from **Justice 2000** talked to students about the consequences of driving without a license. Many new arrivals are eager to learn the rules of the road as driving is a key to independence in Milwaukee. Staff interpreters assisted at these events.

Nutrition Educators **Kazoua Thao** and **Juana Maldonado** from Milwaukee County **UW-Extension** are leading a new 8 week class, Eating Smart, Being Active. The class is required for pre-

school parents, and open to others with children who want to learn more about family nutrition and health. Students have been learning how to understand food labelling, the USDA food pyramid, and how to make healthy choices from the great array of food available at American supermarkets.

Some ILC students took time out from the classroom to help plant trees donated by family of ILC staff. This was a great opportunity for our students to collaborate with native speakers at Neighborhood House Nature Center in Ashippun.

THE STORY ABOUT MY LIFE

by Ephraïse Iradukunda

My name is Ephrasie. I am from Burundi and Tanzania. I was born in 1984. I have one child. I was born in Tanzania Refugee Camp.

My parents left my country in 1972. I had come to America on September 20, 2007. I came to America because my country has problems and no peace. When I was ready to journey to America, I had lost weight. I was very worried. I thought, "How will I start a new life in America?" I've been going to school for one year. I learn Science and English. I like my teacher, Nora. She is a very good teacher. Now I am an excellent communicator.

I like America, but I don't like the weather. My life is hard because I don't have a job. I hope soon, very soon, I will have a job.

more stories at our website: <http://ilcmilwaukee.wordpress.com/students-stories/>



**THANKSGIVING BREAK:
WEDNESDAY NOV. 25
NO EVENING CLASS**

**THURSDAY NOV. 26
NO CLASSES**

**FALL SEMESTER ENDS
DECEMBER 17**

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Did you know?

ILC is the leading center for refugees in the state and serves over 600 students and their families from over 25 countries annually.

International Learning Center

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2009

Staff Notes

ILC staff presented the panel discussion *Our Stories, Our Lives: Refugee Perspectives on the Challenges of Cultural Adjustment in the US* at the **WITESOL** conference in Stevens Point this fall for Wisconsin Teachers of English as a Second or Other Language.

Instructors **Nora Dahl**, **Sally Kuzma**, Bilingual Support Specialist **Zaw Oo** were joined on the panel by **Jim Vang**, Hmong & Hispanic Services Coordinator for CAP Services, Inc., Stevens Point. But the real stars of the show were four ILC staff members who participated via video. **Phan Sanford**, **Macy Lor**, **Song Xiong**, and **Najib Shongolo** all of shared their first-hand experiences of attending Wisconsin schools as refugees and English Language Learners. In addition, **Zaw** spoke of the difficulties interpreters face as they help parents navigate the school system in the US.

Attendees included ESL instructors and teacher trainers. All were very moved by the stories and eager to share them with colleagues. The video is available in the office for staff or volunteers.

Nora reminds us of the value of these gatherings. "During the chaos of the semester, it's easy to lose track of the goals you've initially set for your students and yourself as a teacher. But attending conferences like these puts in perspective what's most important—the students."

*SUCCESS STORY: Teacher **Diana** writes: "A student who is new to computer literacy just emailed me to say he couldn't come to school tomorrow because of a conflict and he's 'not happy because he can't do the spelling test 2 weeks in a row.' I emailed him the words to study. How cool is that!"*

INTERNATIONAL LEARNING CENTER

A Program of Neighborhood House of Milwaukee

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The International Learning Center (formerly Indochinese Learning Center) has provided English as a Second Language instruction to over 5,000 African and Southeast Asian adult refugees in the Milwaukee area since 1981. We specialize in literacy and communication skills for refugees who have had little or no prior education in their own country.



ILC is a program of Neighborhood House of Milwaukee, Inc. and has been an outreach site of the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) since 1989. To assist students in reaching their goals, the center offers support services such as translation, referrals, and licensed, on-site pre-school.

WHAT WE'RE READING



Half the Sky:

Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide

by *Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn*

This is "a passionate call to arms against our era's most pervasive human rights violation: the oppression of women and girls in the developing world." Pulitzer Prize winners Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn take us to far corners of the world to meet the "extraordinary women struggling there, among them a Cambodian teenager sold into sex slavery and an Ethiopian woman who suffered devastating injuries in childbirth. They show how a little help can transform the lives of women and girls abroad. Through these stories, they help us see that the key to economic progress lies in unleashing women's potential. They make clear how so many people have helped to do just that, and how we can each do our part."



PUMPKIN CARVING AT ILC
Beshir Hommeida, from Sudan, and Loan Nguyen, from Vietnam, learn pumpkin carving, American-style, as they practice new English phrases like "scoop out the seeds".

Citizenship & Math Classes Grow

A large corps of volunteers is helping staff to expand our Citizenship and Math classes

Citizenship now meets Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at 8, Wednesday evenings at 5:30, and Saturday mornings at 10 at Lao Christian Church. Volunteer tutors **Sheila, Linda, Tom, Joe, Alex, Nicole, Chue** and **Selene** together with instructors **Song Xiong** and **Dominika Cwalina** have been instrumental in expanding our outreach, which may expand to other sites soon.

Math instructors **Song Xiong** and **Yuliya Matyushkina** are joined this semester by volunteer tutors **Darryl, Ellen, Joan, Marge, Brandon, Lynn, Chelsea, Thao, Vincent, Greg, Samantha, Ken** and **Nun Thara**. All are on hand to help students master basic math and get in shape for employer math assessments that are potential employers are using now.