

ELC Wish List

Announcing the ELC Book Scholarship Fund!

Times are tough — and even tougher for our students, who arrived in this country with next-to-nothing. Although our classes are free, students are required to purchase their textbook for \$18. Even this small cost is prohibitive for many. But you can help. Donate to the ELC Book Scholarship Fund — just \$18 puts a book in the hands of a student in need! For many students, this is the first book they will ever own, and an important symbolic step in their new lives in the United States. Donate online at www.osom-mn.org or use the enclosed envelope, designating your gift “**ELC Book Scholarship Fund**”.

Make your donation today!

Donate online at osom-mn.org/donate or use enclosed envelope.

The English Learning Center is a program of Our Saviour’s Outreach Ministries

Speaking of Books...

Do you have extra books lying around? Donate them to the ELC Library! Our students love to check out books from our small library to practice reading at home, but our collection is sparse.

What to look for:

- Is the book interesting to you?
- Is the English relatively simple? (Our most advanced students read at about an 8th-grade level.)
- Is the topic appropriate?

To make a donation, contact Yer Lee, volunteer coordinator at yer@englishlc.org or 612.874.9963 x2.

Our Mission

Educationally empowering immigrants and refugees toward self-determination.

Every gift you give — whether in-kind, monetary, or your time — makes getting an education possible.

Your partnership provides...

- Classes in English, computers, math and citizenship exam preparation
- Transportation service for students
- Referral and advocacy services for students
- Training for volunteer instructors



Student Profile

Worsene Urgi first stepped into an English Learning Center class in 1996, wearing traditional dress in the colors of the Ethiopian flag. She didn’t just step into an English class that day; she passed through a window into American culture, getting to know a new place, her American teachers, and their language and customs. She remembers attending an ELC Christmas party that year, tasting her first American candy and Coke.



Worsene Urgi

Winters were strange at first, but a teacher found a warm coat for Worsene. Transportation was also confusing during her early days at the ELC. She got to school safely on the first day of class, but when it was time to go home, she did not know which bus to take. Her teacher took her home that night, and Worsene later began to ride in the school van, now driven by her former classmate, ELC Educational Assistant Mohamed Assalle. Her first classes involved learning to form her letters and numbers with a teacher guiding her hand. She was in Beginning English and struggling even to understand what was being said in class.

Sporting a jaunty Norske cap and a red sweater to stay cozy in the Minnesota winter, Worsene has come back to the ELC after a 13 year absence. Now an accomplished English 3 and Math 2 learner, she never fails to act as a liaison and translator for fellow students. In return for early kindnesses shown Worsene by her tutors and fellow students, she now befriends and nurtures others who are having trouble adjusting to their new lives in America. Her instinct leads her to others who need a friend to talk to,

and she encourages her fellow students to try new experiences and meet new people. Her Turkish classmate says she is a good friend and a good cook.

Worsene left the ELC many years ago to support her family, but she has persevered in learning. She has been smiling and helping others since 1996, despite many years of working overtime at the Airport Hilton to support her family in Ethiopia. We are all glad to have her back to complete her education.

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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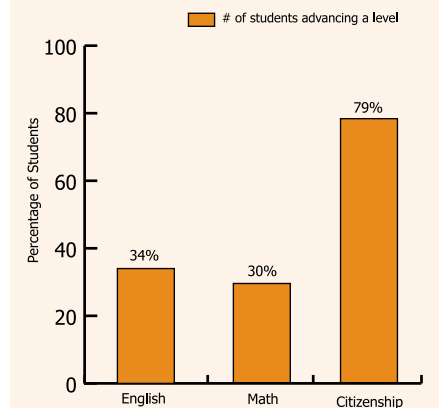
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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The promise of the New Year is that it always brings the promises of possibilities.

We see glimmers of hope as the struggling economy begins to turn around. A few of the unemployed around us are finally finding work. Students, volunteer teachers and staff alike have shared the effects of these hard times. So every now and then, we find reasons to celebrate each other's successes.

Yet in midst of this hope, just as the year began, there was the tragedy of the senseless murders of three Somali men at a market on Franklin Avenue, just a few miles from our school. Father, brother, son, cousin, shopkeeper, and clerk — each of the three murdered men was one of these and more to the others in their lives. And the loss of these lives has had a profound effect on those who surrounded them.

None of these three men were students in our classes. Yet the Somali community in our neighborhood is modest in size and tightly knit, and our student population is well more than half Somali. This event had a profound effect on their lives. Therefore, we are all affected. We grieve with our brothers and sisters at their loss.

I believe that the hope and joy in the English Learning Center program is the connectedness created by the work we do. In the midst of our focus on learning, we build cross-cultural relationships. And in these relationships we share each other's joys and sorrows — even, and especially, in times of tragedy.

Warmly,



Sandy Aslaksen
Executive Director

Student Writing

Editor's note:

Following are some English writing samples. Where you see errors, please note we have kept the spelling and grammar in the notes exactly as our students wrote them. You are reading the authentic writing of adults who are learning to read and write in English.

do you haye winter jocket? (Do you have a winter jacket?)

yes I heye a winter jocket (Yes. I have a winter jacket.)

– **Beginning English student from Somalia – 70 years old**

What ere you thankful for? thankful I am thankful for school

– **Beginning English student from Ethiopia – 66 years old**

I am from India. It has many rivers. There are many holy rivers like the Ganges and Jamua. The land is flat with some mountains. In winter the weather is not much cold, and summer is quite hot. In India, some people live in cities and some live in villages. But weather is good for life.

– **English 4 student from India – 56 years old**

My educational goals when I finish this school is to go to collage and I hope in the future to be a doctor of Ob/GYN.

– **English 4 student from Somalia – 23 years old**

Thank you for teaching me Math, English and computer for the few months I am in this school. I want to speak more English but am learning to read and understand English better. When I go to shopping in the Super Market I can't ask the shopkeeper the things I want. I ask all my teacher to help me how I can speak with all the people clearly.

– **English 5/6 student from Somalia – 69 years old**

Volunteer Highlights

The English Learning Center (ELC) is pleased to announce a new full-time volunteer! Lenore Doctor joined the ELC through the Lutheran Volunteer Corps



Lenore Doctor

last August as the Student Support and Math Curriculum Coordinator. Lenore has 30 years' experience teaching high school and college English in Ohio. "Lenore has already accomplished so much in this short time by organizing focus groups with our volunteer tutors that resulted in activity development, and improvement of key materials," states Yer Lee, volunteer coordinator. The Lutheran Volunteer Corps matches individuals with nonprofit organizations for one year of service, focusing on social justice and living in an intentional community with other volunteers. Please welcome Lenore to our team!

All good things must come to an end. We were sad to say goodbye to one of our most beloved longtime volunteers this year. Warren Loud, a brilliant and generous retired Math professor from the University of Minnesota, also "retired" from his 10+ years as an ELC math tutor, and his tireless tackling of fractions, measurements, algebra and geometry. Warren and his wife Mary remain dear friends of Our Saviour's Outreach Ministries and the English Learning Center. He is missed by his students and staff, and we wish him all the best.

Volunteer Opportunities

Looking for a way to get involved?

"No experience necessary!"

The English Learning Center is always looking for committed volunteers to teach English, math, citizenship and computer classes. The following are ways you can get involved:

English as a Second Language (ESL) Volunteers

M,T,W,Th

Volunteer hours: 5:45 – 8:45pm;
Class hours: 6:45 – 8:30pm

Lead a class of 10–15 adult immigrants and refugees in learning English. Lesson plans and supplemental materials, including visuals and reference books, provided by ELC staff.

Math Volunteers

M,T,W,Th

Volunteer hours: 5:15 – 6:45pm;
Class hours: 5:30 – 6:30pm

You don't have to be a "math whiz" to tutor in our classrooms. Students work at their own pace through practice exercises. Volunteers rotate around the classroom, assisting students one-on-one or in very small groups to explain new concepts and administer quizzes and tests.

Computer Volunteers

M,T,W,Th

Volunteer hours: 4:30 – 6:30pm

Volunteers assist students individually with basic computer skills, and may also have the opportunity to develop classroom projects.

New Opportunity!

Citizenship Study Hall — Volunteers needed on Wednesday evenings, 5:30 – 6:30. Training provided. This pilot program provides students with individualized attention to build skills necessary to pass the U.S. Citizenship Test.

The English Learning Center is a great volunteer opportunity for people interested in education or connecting with the immigrant and refugee populations in South Minneapolis.

Contact our Volunteer Coordinator Yer Lee at yer@englishlc.org or 612.874.9963 x2 for more information.