Making Contributions to English Learners is Gratifying

I’ve been a teacher my whole life; I started teaching language at Pickleweed in 1998. I teach the most advanced ESL (English as a Second Language) classes at Whistlestop. My Iranian, Persian, Ukrainian and Japanese students were very well educated in their own language.

Learning to speak a new language opens many doors. Teaching my students is very satisfying for me, because they get to learn that knowing English is important when you live in this country. I’m so proud when one of my students tells me their child is going on to college!

Teaching is so much more than being a teacher. You’re a friend. You are a confidante, you are a parent, and you are a counselor. Many of my past students come back and tell me that knowing English has allowed them to open a small business, or they have found other work where English is a necessity.

Teaching at Whistlestop is different than when I teach people who are younger than I. I’m now talking to people my own age and some who are even older than I am. We are all in this together, whether we realize it or not. We all have health problems. We all have aches and pains and arthritis.

The lessons I learn from my students at Whistlestop are that organic eating is very healthy; we all need to get medical checkups as we age, and everyone should get a flu shot. At Whistlestop, most of my students take ESL classes as a social activity. They like to eat lunch together and join other events to be around people they know and like.

I teach classes on Mondays and Wednesdays. I work with Hispanic students who need special help to pass their citizenship test. We take practice tests. English classes can be daunting when people first come to the U.S. I have worked at the Canal Alliance as a volunteer ESL teacher. I learned Spanish when I was 55 years old so I could be more helpful to my students.

Several things can contribute to making learning a new language easier: exercise and dancing or playing a musical instrument. Whistlestop’s...
Jose Luis Rodriguez, 93, a member of our Hispanic group at Whistlestop, appreciates the opportunity to socialize at our Active Aging Center. At the same time, he has concerns about how the immigration issue is discussed in the news media.

Jose lives in San Rafael and has five children, 20 grandchildren and more than 50 great-grandchildren. All of his children live in the U.S. and some of his grandchildren live in Mexicali, Mexico.

We interviewed Jose as part of the February Express themed stories on Multiculturalism.

Q. Where are you from?
A. I am from Michoacán, Mexico.

Q. What do you miss most about Mexico?
A. I miss all my friends – the ones I used to do trips with like “Jaripeos” (horse shows). I also miss the traditional food I had there.

Q. How long have you been in the U.S.?
A. I have been in the United States for about 30 years.

Q. What do you like best about being in the U.S.?
A. I like everything because I have centers like Whistlestop where I can have a good time with friends and people from other cultures and nationalities. It’s a safe place to live, and there is not the same violence as in Mexico. I am afraid to go back to Mexico because people there think we come back with lots of dollars, and there are a lot of kidnappings.

Q. How do you feel about the Immigration discussion going on now on TV and in the news?
A. I feel bad because U.S. government members do not agree about an immigration reform. I think it’s important to resolve this, so the millions of Latin immigrants who work hard to contribute to the U.S. economy will be able to stay here.

Q. What do you appreciate most about Whistlestop?
A. I appreciate that there are so many benefits, such as socializing with other members, meeting people from other cultures, doing exercises, getting good food, and more.
Multicultural Department Offers Support

The Multicultural Department at Whistlestop provides cultural programs that include weekly social group gatherings, language classes, luncheons and picnics, and celebrations for culturally specific holidays, such as the Tet Festival (Vietnamese and Chinese New Year), Russian New Year, Nowruz (Persian New Year), and Cinco de Mayo. We have Spanish speaking, German, French, Vietnamese, Persian, and Russian social groups. People can take advantage of English, French, Italian, German, and Spanish language classes. The Multicultural Department provides support services and events, as well as cultural arts and exercise programs.

We also provide assistance in Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, English, and Farsi for issues such as U.S. citizenship, housing opportunities, legal assistance, health education, in-home support, subsidy programs, tutoring, referrals, and translation services upon request. The purpose of these programs is to connect various cultural groups in Marin by bringing them together to socialize, take classes, and to get the support they need.

To receive more information about these programs and services in English, call 415-456-9062. Spanish language assistance, Marta Villela, ext. 131. Russian language assistance, Anna Ladyzhenskaya, ext. 138. Vietnamese language assistance, Dina Duong, ext. 129.

There is no cost for consultation services, but there is a small fee for translation and citizenship application services. You can also learn more by viewing our Active Aging Center website multicultural program listings at: http://www.whistlestop.org/classes/multicultural-programs/other-classes/.

Seeking Valentine’s Day Cards

Whistlestop invites everyone to make homemade Valentine’s Day cards for Meals on Wheels participants. Their eyes light up when they receive these cards!

Be creative, let your inner artist come out, and invite children you know to create the cards with you! Mail or deliver your cards to Whistlestop, 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael, 94901. Must arrive by Friday, Feb. 5. Call 415-456-9062 for more details.
Vietnam Native Loves Being in U.S. and Grateful for Whistlestop Activities

She said she is very happy she became a citizen because she wants to stay in the U.S. Her daughter sponsored her. Her son and her mother still live in Vietnam and want to remain there.

“I am very happy because I have made a lot of friends.” Phan added that she likes the culture of Whistlestop that keeps her coming back again and again. “I am still learning about the U.S. all the time.” Meeting with friends at Whistlestop and at Pickleweed helps her better understand U.S. customs and cultures. Phan lives near Pickleweed and first learned about Whistlestop from programs there.

Phan has been coming regularly to Whistlestop for the past six years.

“I am still learning about the U.S. all the time.”

Vietnam Native Loves Being in U.S. and Grateful for Whistlestop Activities

Phan Duong
Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP

For a full list of classes and services, check out the monthly calendar online at whistlestop.org/classes/ or pick one up at the Active Aging Center. Fees listed for classes show the member fee, followed by the non-member fee. Join Whistlestop for the 2016 year to enjoy valuable discounts and benefits! Remember to sign up for all classes and events in advance by visiting or calling the front desk at 415-456-9062. *Please note that Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center will be closed on February 15 in honor of President’s Day.

CELEBRATIONS

Asian New Year
Thurs, Feb 4, 2:30-4:30pm; $5 Suggested Donation
Celebrate the Year of the Monkey with delicious Asian cuisine and entertainment from our Vietnamese social group and Asian community in the Caboose. Sign-up by Feb 1 at our front office.

Venetian Carnival Lunch
Thurs, Feb 11, 11:30am-1pm; $10/12
You must buy tickets by Mon, Feb 8
Celebrate a traditional Venetian carnival in our Jackson Café with delicious Italian food, decorations, entertainment, and a presentation from popular teacher Karen Raccanello and her Italian language students. Featuring Pasta Penne Bolognese (or Pesto for vegetarians), Antipasto, Italian Salad, Garlic Bread, and Tiramisu.

NEW/HIGHLIGHTED CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Cal Fresh/Food Stamps: Are you Eligible?
Tues, Feb 9, 2-3pm; Free
Instructor: Representative from Marin County Health and Human Services. Learn the facts about food stamps and eligibility, and dispel the myths with an informational presentation provided by Marin County Health and Human Services.

Watercolor with Anna
Starting Wed, Feb 10 for 8 weeks, 10:30am-12pm; $30/35
Instructor: Anna Ladyzhenskaya
Learn watercolor techniques with talented artist Anna Ladyzhenskaya. All levels of ability welcome. Supplies provided.

Creating Life Reflection Stories
3 Thursdays starting Feb 11, 2:15-3:45pm; $15/20 plus S6 workbook fee • Pre-registration required
Instructor: Melanie Vetter, Certified Senior Advisor, Guided Autobiography Instructor, and Legacy Coach.

NEW/HIGHLIGHTED HEALTH PROGRAMS

Tai Chi for Health and Well-being
Wed, 9-10am; Fee: $5-10 (sliding scale for members)/$12 non-members
Tai Chi offers gentle energy work for all levels of ability. Experience these slow, healing, relaxing exercises from ancient China. This class is on a drop-in basis; no advance sign-ups required. Instructor Calvin Ahlgren has taught at Whistlestop for eight years.

Weekly Blood Pressure, Cholesterol Screenings, & Medication Reviews
Fridays, 9:30-11am; Free (Donations Appreciated)
Free weekly blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, and medication reviews are being provided by Bright Star Care, a home care agency that provides home care, caregivers, and medical staffing solutions to families and businesses in Marin. Call 415-332-3300 for more information about BrightStar services.

Monthly Blood Pressure Screening and Medication Review
Tues, Feb 9, 11am-1pm; Free (Donations Appreciated)
Free monthly blood pressure screenings provided by Dominican University nursing students. Bring your medications (over-the-counter and prescriptions) for review.

Medicare 101 Seminar:
Learn the Nuts and Bolts
Wed, Feb 10, 10:30am-12:30pm; Free (Donations Appreciated)
Instructor: Cara Suminski of SCAN Health Plan
Turning 65? Losing coverage with an employer? Medicare can be confusing. What’s the difference between Part A and Part B? How much gets deducted from Social Security? What are your options? This event is only for educational purposes and no plan-specific benefits or details will be shared.

HIGHLIGHTED SUPPORT SERVICES

Multicultural Consultants
Offer Help
By appointment: 415-456-9062
Spanish/English: Marta Villela, ext. 131; Russian/English: Anna Ladyzhenskaya, ext. 138; Vietnamese/English: Dina Duong, ext. 129 • No fee for consultations; small fee may apply for translation services. Whistlestop offers assistance to English and non-English speakers in Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese. We assist with applications for many social services, such as healthcare management, citizenship, housing, employment, and federal assistance, plus translations and referrals.

Homeshare Program
For appointments call Leslie Klor: 415-456-9062, ext. 132; Free (Donations Appreciated)
The Homeshare Program is a free referral service for older adults providing an affordable and alternative way of meeting housing needs with numerous benefits to renters and homeowners. Do you have a room to share, or do you need a place to live? Do you know someone who can use our services?

Telephone Reassurance Program
For information and to register call Leslie Klor: 415-456-9062, ext. 132
Free (Donations Appreciated)
Do you live alone? Would you like someone to care about how you are doing? If you often feel isolated and are looking for connection and peace of mind, this program is for you. Trained volunteers will call you three mornings a week to check on you. They can answer questions about other senior resources. We now also offer this service in Spanish.

Resources, Outreach, & Assistance for Victims and Witnesses of Crime
2nd & 4th Thursdays, 9am-12pm
Yolanda Johnson, Advocate from the District Attorney’s office, will be available to meet with you to answer questions, provide information, and connect you to resources, or you can call 415-473-6450.

Free Legal Consultation for Adults
Four Thursdays from 3-5pm monthly at Whistlestop; 1st and 3rd Thursdays from 12:30-2:30pm, Mill Valley Community Center
By appointment only: 415-459-6700 for appointments at both locations
Legal Aid of Marin provides a free 30-minute legal consultation for Marin County residents who are 60 years and older. Four Marin lawyers volunteer to give general advice, offer options, explain rights and, if appropriate, refer to attorneys who have expertise in specific areas of law.
Pre-registration and payment required. To register, Call 415-456-9062. See details of classes online.

February and March 2016

Intro to Computers (Windows)

Tuesdays, Feb 2, 9, 16 & 23 (4 classes), 10am-Noon
Fee: $65  Maximum 8 people
Designed for first-time computer users, you will learn how to start your computer and turn it off, use the mouse and keyboard to perform basic computer tasks, use Windows components to create and print a document, identify the basic parts of a computer and their use, search the Internet to find information and set up an email account.

iPad/iPhone Basics 1: Getting to Know Your Device

Tuesdays, Mar 8 & 15, (2 classes), 10am-Noon
Fee: $48  Maximum 8 people
Congratulations, you finally got your own iPhone or iPad but you have no idea how to use it. In this personalized, two week course, you’ll be guided through how to make calls, send emails, send texts, download music and add applications. Sessions provide one-on-one help. Handouts.

ONGOING

Open Lab

Every Monday and Wednesday, 10am-Noon
No Fee • Use our PCs for your own purposes, such as accessing the Internet. Volunteer staff available for advice on problems with your electronic devices, laptops, tablets, and software applications.

NEW WHISTLESTAR MEMBERSHIPS:

JOIN NOW for $10-$20 (sliding scale) and your membership is good through Dec. 31, 2016.

Jackson Café

NEW LUNCH PRICES

Whistlestop and Jackson Café are closed Monday 2/15/16.

WHISTLESTAR MEMBER (LOWEST PRICE) /NON-MEMBER

Main Entrée
$6/$8 (includes coffee or hot tea)
Burger and Fries
$6/$7
Sandwiches
$6/$7
Soup du Jour (bowl)
$4/$5
Garden/Caesar Salads
$5/$6

OTHER ITEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beverage</th>
<th>$2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desserts</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRICES INCLUDE TAX
When it comes to family, quality is key. Hired Hands is honored to win the prestigious Best of Homecare award for our 3rd consecutive year from Home Care Pulse, a national Quality Assurance firm that gauges client and employee satisfaction with care providers across many areas, including compassion, work ethic, training and communication.

This award recognizes that we greatly appreciate the feedback of those we work with, and are dedicated to the highest level of Quality, Expertise, and Professionalism in senior care.

Learn more at hiredhandshomecare.com/bestof

Hired Hands Inc.
Homecare
Family owned and operated since 1994

415-884-4343
HiredHandsHomecare.com

When Whistlestop has been Marin’s older adult connection for 62 years, occasionally youngsters are seen benefiting from some of the center’s classes. Two examples are Arian, 10, a fifth grader, and Kasra, 9, a fourth grader, who are Farsi classmates here.

Arian, who was born in the U.S., has been learning Farsi for five years now. She said her teacher, Mrs. Mehrbanoo Esmaili, has helped them to read books written in Farsi. “We also learn how to write and give dance performances,” she said. “We will be giving a big performance in Marin County for the Persian New Year on March 21, which is the first day of spring.”

Arian likes to give speeches and tell jokes in Farsi, as well as using Farsi when she’s conversing at home. “My parents want me to learn the language of where they were born (Iran).” And she enjoys getting in touch with her culture. But she does her homework in English.

Kasra says, “Farsi class is good and I like learning to speak the language.”

He added, “Sometimes we see seniors at Whistlestop when we are dropped off

‘I like to peek inside the rooms; I see lots of fun looking stuff like older people making cards, eating yummy food, and playing ping pong.’

Continued on page 9
From Leningrad to Whistlestop

By ANNA LADYZHENSKAYA
Russian Multicultural Coordinator

Genrikh Laumberg

Genrikh Laumberg has lived through much as a Russian citizen and now a resident of Marin County, and he finds Whistlestop a unique place that provides vital services to older adults.

We interviewed Genrikh, aged 82, who came here from Leningrad (Saint Petersburg). His answers follow:

Q. What do you think about the way Russians are portrayed in American media – in the news, in movies, on TV?
Genrikh: In the news and most movies, Russians are portrayed very honestly and objectively. I like “Homeland” very much and the old movie “Moscow on the Hudson.” But one movie, “The Gambler,” (based on Dostoevsky’s novel) shows Saint Petersburg and Russia as one grey street. It is not like that.

Q. What special Russian meals do you most enjoy? Do you cook at home and are there any Russian restaurants that you like here?
A. My wife and I mostly cook and eat at home. Generally, I eat very simple. I am 82 years old. I lived through World War II so I am not spoiled that way. My favorite food is cabbage and everything from fresh and pickled cabbage to stuffed cabbage leaves and cabbage soup. My favorite restaurant is L’Olivier in San Francisco. The owner is Russian and we love food there. It is expensive so we’ve gone there only a couple of times to celebrate my wife’s and my anniversary.

Q. Which Russian holidays do you celebrate?
A. We celebrate New Year’s twice. This is a tradition. First on December 31-January 1 and then January 13, which is Old Russian New Year. The Old Russian Calendar was 13 days apart and December 31 happened January 13. We also celebrate the World War II Victory Day on May 9 every year.

Q. Which American holidays do you celebrate?
A. We celebrate Thanksgiving and Fourth of July – Independence Day.

Q. What do you appreciate most about Whistlestop?
A. Whistlestop is a very good organization. We appreciate very much everything it does: the resources and information; having a Russian-speaking Coordinator who helps most of us who can’t communicate in English is a huge deal. Also, help with citizenship preparation; ESL classes, regular food donation; transportation. These are all vital needs, especially for immigrants like us. Thank you so much for all you do! Have a great New Year!

CHILDREN continued from page 8

for our class. I like to peek inside the rooms; I see lots of fun looking stuff like older people making cards, eating yummy food, and playing ping pong. I’d like to play ping pong with the seniors if I wasn’t taking Farsi lessons!”

Both children have made presentations about Persian culture as part of their schoolwork. Arian learned Farsi before she learned English. Kasra says learning Farsi is challenging. “It is harder to learn Farsi when you speak English first, because Farsi can be confusing.”

Persian is a Poetic Language

The Persian language is one of the world’s oldest languages still in use today, and is known to have one of the most powerful literary traditions, with formidable Persian poets like Ferdowsi, Hafiz, Khayyam, Attar, Saadi, Nizami, Roudaki, Rumi and Sanai. By native speakers it eventually came to be known as Farsi, which was the Arabic form of Parsi as there is no “P” sound in Arabic. Additionally, Persian was constitutionally renamed from Farsi to Dari in Afghanistan during the 1960s. The dialect of Persian spoken in Tajikistan is called Tajiki.

“Persian” has historically referred to some Iranian languages, however what today is referred to as the Persian language is part of the Western group of the Iranian languages branch of the Indo-European language family. Today, speakers of the western dialect of Persian form the majority in Iran.

(From Wikipedia)
Lisa Zaslove began volunteering at Whistlestop in October of 2012 shortly after she retired from her job as the Mental Health Training Director at Walden House in San Francisco. She was looking for something meaningful to do with her time and decided to put her unused teaching certificate to use. Lisa found her passion at Whistlestop in the English as a Second Language (ESL) tutoring program.

In the three years she has been here, she has taught, mentored and connected with four adult students. She is still working with several of them who are now lifelong friends. Through the process of learning English, Lisa and her students share life stories, family issues, work concerns, and desires.

By having a safe and nurturing place to practice their English, students are able to grow and expand their horizons for a better future. The support they get in the tutoring program goes beyond the basic reading, writing and citizenship studies. Lisa is able to gently give them advice and correct them so they progress and have more active and fulfilling lives.

Lisa grew up in Los Angeles, lived for a while in the Philippines and has called Marin home since the ’90’s. In addition to tutoring at Whistlestop, Lisa also teaches Intermediate English through Canal Alliance and still supervises several interns through her former job. She spends some of her spare time practicing Tai Chi, folk dancing, studying and watching great films and taking care of her African Gray parrot.

Lisa said, “Most people do not realize the huge personal rewards which come from helping someone improve their lives. The love and appreciation that comes from this one-on-one interaction is a win-win for everyone.”

Ana Q., one of Lisa’s students, said of her teacher, “Lisa’s dedication and patience helped me improve my writing and grammar skills for my work. I am thankful for all she does.”

If you would like information about our ESL tutoring program – teaching or language experience are helpful but not required – or any other volunteer opportunities at Whistlestop, please call Laurie at 415-456-9062, ext. 117, or email: lvermont@whistlestop.org.
How to Become a Birder

Tips from Audubon: Start by getting your hands on a field guide. Any book will do as long as it has pictures of each bird and maps of their range. Keep this book in a place where you’ll be able to leisurely flip through it for a couple minutes each day. What are the different kinds of birds? Where do they live, and in what seasons? To supplement your field guide examination, learn some things about avian biology and the sport of birding. Watch all of the BBC’s Life of Birds series, hosted by your new hero David Attenborough. Learn about why birds are birds, and how they’ve evolved into such incredible creatures.

Sandhill Cranes: Ma, Pa & Junior, Photo taken in the Delta, January 1, 2014.

Eliminate Mortgage Payments Forever with the Home Equity Conversion Mortgage

Call Today for a FREE Information Kit and No Obligation Consultation

Dominique Stevens
Senior Mortgage Advisor
(415) 250-8908
ds@dominiquestevens.com
reversehomeloanscalifornia.com

- Retain Home ownership
- FHA/HUD Insured Program
- Receive Monthly Payments or Lump Sum
- Live Comfortably in Your Own Home
- Many Options Available

Serving Marin and Sonoma Counties

Trusted providers of compassionate in-home care for seniors.

- Light Housekeeping & Laundry
- Meal Preparation & Clean Up
- Medication Reminders
- Personal Care, Respite Care
- Wardrobe, Dressing Assistance
- Help with Daily Grooming
- Bathing & Toileting Assistance
- Help with Ambulation
- Bed-bound Assistance
- Protective Supervision for those with Impaired Judgment
- Transportation & Errand Services
- Companionship, Conversation
- Meal Planning, Grocery Shopping
- Help with Pets
- And much, much more…

(707) 931-4280 • (415) 599-4333
northbay.homewellseniorcare.com

Free Consultation • Same Day Staffing

The Bird’s Side of MARIN
By RICHARD PAVEK
Whistlestop Seniors’ Circle, an open support group, meets 10-11:30am Wednesdays.

Want to Advertise?

Contact the Pacific Sun at 415-485-6700 for rates and deadlines

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Make a difference in an older adult’s life.

Whistlestop CarePool Volunteer Driver Program
This position offers round trip rides to ambulatory older adults going to the doctor or grocery store. Drivers use their own cars and receive ride requests through email. Drivers can accept or decline the calls, and drive on their own schedule. Ride lengths vary from 30 minutes to four hours for each round trip. Volunteers must have access to reliable passenger automobile with current insurance certificate, a valid California Driver’s License and a clear background check and DMV report.

Jackson Café Lunch Servers, Cashiers & Friday Community Breakfast Servers
The Jackson Café provides a warm and comfortable setting for older adults to eat a nutritious meal at an affordable price. Café volunteers provide friendly greetings, excellent customer service and support social interaction. Café volunteers receive a free breakfast or lunch. Lunch hour shifts are: Monday to Friday, 10:45am-2pm. The Café is open from 11:30am-2pm. Cashier or food service experience is a plus but not required. The Friday morning breakfast shift is from 8:30-10:30am. Breakfast is served from 9-10am on Friday only.

Brown Bag Pantry Volunteers Needed
Helpers needed on Friday morning from 9:15am-12:15pm for the Brown Bag Pantry. Unload truck from Food Bank, sort produce, greet and help recipients get their food. This fun group is looking for new members. Ability to lift 25 lbs. is a plus.

Meals on Wheels Drivers Needed
Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers are needed to deliver meals to home-bound seniors. A valid California Driver’s License and a clear DMV report are needed as well as a reliable vehicle and current insurance certificate. A minimum of one 3-hour weekday shift is required.

To learn more about these opportunities or others contact: volunteer@whistlestop.org. Phone: 415-456-9062 ext. 117 www.whistlestop.org