

MESSENGER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER & PRAYER GUIDE



Ramazan, Salomat, Marc, and Zing Te learn basic nouns, verbs, common expressions, and cultural tips, and make friends, while attending English class at Neighbors Community Center.

PHOTO BY TIMM WENGER

WHAT YOU MIGHT NOT NOTICE by Brenda Krick-Morales

If you pass by 450 North Prince Street in Lancaster, you might think it's just another office building with a coffee shop on the first floor. You might even think that Lancaster doesn't need another building like this one, even if the coffee and tea are excellent. But that would be an incorrect assumption ... because of other activities that you might not notice.

Every Tuesday and Thursday morning and evening, Neighbors Community Center is a classroom — several classrooms in fact. These classrooms are filled with adults learning English. They are also filled with laughter and fun.

Since 2022, Neighbors has offered classes for adult learners of

English. The students come from many countries and have varied educational experiences. Some are refugees with limited schooling, others had professional jobs in their home countries. All have one goal — to learn English so they can more fully participate in their new country.

Residents of Lancaster County speak more than 70 languages. In Lancaster City, nearly a third of residents speak a language other than English. It is easy to see why language classes are both popular and necessary.

Students are placed into classes based on their level of English proficiency. All who register for classes complete a quick assessment of their English skills and are then assigned

to the class that best meets their needs.

Several volunteers come in to complete these assessments during the registration period. Prospective students wait in the cafe and lobby until it is their turn. Some come in family groups — others with case-workers from Church World Service (Lancaster's primary immigration and refugee resettlement organization). All want to get into a class to improve their English. Because of the number of prospective students and the desire to get all of them into a class, Neighbors has added an additional level 1 beginner class. Even with another class available, there is a waiting list for the next session.

NEIGHBORS COMMUNITY CENTER

In Luke 10, an expert of the law asked Jesus what one must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus answered the man with a question, "What is written in the Law?" The man responded with "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" The man went on to ask Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus used the story of the Good Samaritan to help the man understand who a neighbor is. At the end of the parable, Jesus asked, "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert of the law said, "The one who had mercy on him."

This is why Neighbors Community Center exists — loving our neighbors the way Jesus did. This includes holistic ministry such as an English program, providing support for other programs that serve refugees/immigrants, hosting cultural events for the community, and more. Neighbors Community Center is a multicultural gathering place for connecting, learning, and celebrating.

The community center is a program of Eastern Mennonite Missions and was previously known as Hub450. Now, Hub450 is the name of the building that is home to these four permanent entities: Neighbors Community Center, Neighbors Cafe, LMC, and EMM. Neighbors Cafe is a privately owned business.

Volunteers make the English classes and child care happen. Do you have experience, interest, and availability to help out? Check out the website for more information and to apply.

NEIGHBORSLANCASTER.ORG/VOLUNTEER



... CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT

There are also a lot of regular attenders. Many students have to walk, and yet they keep coming back to class. They don't give up. They have jobs, families, and busy lives, but they come to class regularly, even though learning a new language is yet another challenge.

What do the students learn? It depends on which class they are in. Level 1 classes teach basic survival English. Visit that class, and you will see small groups repeating what the teacher says and answering simple questions. You can see the pride when they say something correctly, and the happiness at learning something new.

Level 2 English expands on what students learned in Level 1. They work with more complex words and sentences. Sometimes, they role-play going to a restaurant or grocery store. They ask for items from a list, pay for them, and receive change.

Students in the level 3 class often discuss topics like health care and celebrations, describing how things are different in their home countries and how they are the same. They also work on reading and writing skills as many had professional jobs and would like to find similar employment here.

Learning words and grammar is only part of what happens. Students at Neighbors find a place of acceptance and security, where they can feel comfortable and at home. They

make connections with other students and their teachers. The number of students who attend regularly is a testament to the connections they make.

One student said it was the first place that helped her when she came to the United States. Others are able to take classes because of the child care that is offered. One student mentioned he did not have anyone to watch his infant daughter while his wife was working and he was in class. Recently, the staff and teachers had an impromptu baby shower for a student. She was surprised and touched as she repeated, "Thank you, thank you so much."

One psychological theory holds that language is the root of culture and is significant to learning. By providing a welcoming and safe place to learn English, Neighbors allows its newcomer students to also learn about their new culture and adjust to it. As they adjust, they feel more confident and capable.

So, if you're passing by Neighbors at the end of class, take time to watch as students depart. See their smiles and waves as they leave, and know that this is a place of learning and refuge.



Brenda Krick-Morales is a volunteer with the English program at Neighbors Community Center.

CELEBRATING LEGACIES



Helen (Shenk) Good, 93, of Debary, Fla., went to be with the Lord on November 4. Helen, and her husband, Lewis, served with EMM in Cottage City, Md., from 1971 to 1973.



Noah E. Hochstetler, 87, Elkhart, Ind., went to be with the Lord on December 8. Noah, and his wife, Loretta, served with EMM in Belize from 1986 to 2011.

JANUARY DAILY PRAYER

1 LEBANON CITY, PA. | Please pray for Michael Clancy, who will be taking a three-month sabbatical beginning in January. During this time, he will focus on rest, refreshment, and refocusing. He plans to work with a spiritual director to help him understand what it means to seek Jesus for Jesus' sake — to re-learn how to sit at his feet.

2 THAILAND | Pray for God to call pioneer church planters into the harvest field of Thailand to join the team there.

3 GLOBAL | Pray for the Advance team, who arrived safely at their outreach locations. Pray for God's wisdom and strength as they experience culture shock, and pray that they would make meaningful connections with the locals.

4 CAMBODIA | Pray that the many children who are involved in the after-school program that John Coats oversees will experience God's love for them. Pray for wisdom for his wife, Debbie, as she treats the health issues of her patients.

5 BELIZE | Pray for Tim and Julie Groff as they relate to many people through Bible stories, visiting people who are homebound, youth groups, and discipleship. Pray for the necessary funds to come in for their ministry in Belize.

6 LANCASTER, PA. | Pray for God to call volunteers for the programs at Neighbors Community Center at Hub450, our building in Lancaster, Pa.

7 CZECH REPUBLIC | Praise the Lord for the new people God has brought into Jan Heindel's life. Pray for wisdom as she interacts with them and shares Jesus. Pray for the church planting team in Dobříš to have discernment as they determine which opportunities to prioritize. Ask God to raise up people to help with a potential club for teenagers.

8 THE GAMBIA | Pray for the Mandinka people of The Gambia, that God would open the eyes and ears of those who don't yet know Jesus.

9 GLOBAL | Pray for William Higgins as he engages global partner churches through seminars and other training related to discipleship and leadership development.

10 U.S. | Ask God to infill the EMM leadership team as they meet today and make decisions guiding the organization.

11 THAILAND | Pray for Steve Horst and Bethany Tobin as they return from sabbatical and pick-up their normal responsibilities again. Pray for God's peace in this transition. Pray for God to provide the needed funds for their term.

12 GERMANY | Pray for Eric and Janelle's* relationships with friends who don't know Jesus yet. Ask that they will have opportunities to bear witness to Jesus in their interactions. Pray also for wisdom in balancing family and ministry.

13 NETHERLANDS | Pray for Bob and Miriam Phillips as they minister through leadership development, evangelism training, and arts outreach.

14 U.S. | Pray for God to raise up Kingdom Team staff to serve with youth in the summer of 2025.

15 CENTRAL ASIA | Pray for spiritual protection for Elizabeth* as she prays with and intercedes for many people.

16 CENTRAL ASIA | Pray for God to send workers to the field to work in business for transformation and teaching English.

17 GLOBAL | Pray for J.C. Ebersole in his involvement with All-nations Association of Bible Schools. Pray that they will have the funds and resources to make Biblical education available and affordable in local churches and communities around the world.

18 THAILAND | Pray for Fernando Valencia, who is getting ready to serve on a short-term assignment in Thailand. Pray that the Holy Spirit would prepare his heart and mind for this assignment.

19 MOROCCO | Pray for Morocco, that the people's hearts would be good soil that is ready to receive the word of God.

20 GLOBAL | Pray for God to call Advance Global participants for the fall of 2025.

21 GLOBAL | Pray that the documentary film, Unexpected Peace, could be fully integrated into the work of the Christian-Muslim Relations Team. Pray for people making subtitles in multiple languages and that the film might touch many people. Pray also for the funding required.

22 CAMBODIA | Pray for workers to be called to the work of young adult outreach and discipleship in Cambodia.

23 CAMBODIA | Pray for Kandace Glenn as she supervises two Advance participants in their ministry outreach.

24 AFRICA | Pray for the Somali people in Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Pray that the truth of Jesus' saving grace would be known through word and deed of the workers around them.

25 U.S. | Pray that Angie Earl will faithfully represent Jesus in her relationships with those who are not believers. May she be a witness to God's way of peace.

26 GLOBAL | Give thanks to God for his provision during the previous year. Ask him to provide the resources needed through the generosity of his people.

27 HONDURAS | Pray for Austin and Griselda Zuercher as they serve in Honduras. Pray for Austin as he gives leadership to the Honduran VidaNet base. Praise the Lord for the way God is working at El Nido. Pray for Griselda as she continues to minister to the women involved in the program.

28 WEST AFRICA | Pray for individuals and families to be called to join the work of leadership development and church planting in West Africa.

29 LANCASTER, PA. | Praise the Lord for the faithful volunteers who help out at the reception desk for both EMM and LMC. Ask the Lord to call more volunteers to serve in welcoming guests to Hub450.

30 LANCASTER, PA. | Pray for the search for a Kingdom Teams director. Ask God to bring the right person who is equipped and committed to serving our local youth groups.

31 GLOBAL | Pray for Leon and Naomi Zimmerman as they lead couples through a marriage course and as they equip those couples to in turn train others.

*Names changed for sensitivity reasons.



Eastern Mennonite Missions

PO Box 8617
Lancaster, PA 17604-8617 US

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

▶ ADVANCE

People want to know why they should do Advance. When you step into the calling of God, you are going to learn and grow in at least three key ways. **You will learn more about God, yourself, and the world.**

You will learn more about God. By walking with God, studying Scripture, and joining together in community with others who are doing the same, you will come to know God more personally and more deeply.

You will learn more about yourself. By stepping out into new experiences, you will learn ways that you are gifted, things you are interested in, and things that you aren't. You can stoke your passions, fanning into flame the most important desires of your hearts.

You will learn more about the world. As you meet people from other cultures and other nations, you will see how God has created them and their unique gifts. You will gain new perspectives, seeing the bigger picture of human creativity, human need, and how you can get involved.



EMM.ORG/ADVANCE

THE IMPACT FUND FOR 2025 NEED IS \$1,862,923

When you support EMM's Impact Fund, you enable us to recruit, equip, and send EMM workers around world.



\$1,862,923 GOAL



EMM.ORG/GIVE

Communications director: Micah Brickner
Digital communications coordinator: Julia Tsai

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