

Magical Spring Gala at National Geographic



Student speakers Gustavo Henriques, Jeraldly Herrera and Pauline Nadege Nouk inspired the crowd.

On May 10, over 200 friends of Language ETC gathered at the National Geographic's elegant downtown D.C. headquarters to celebrate the school and its students. The event raised a record-breaking \$80,000.

In the evening's highlight, three LETC students—Gustavo Henriques from El Salvador, Jeraldly Herrera from Colombia, and Pauline Nadege Nouk from Cameroon—delivered speeches. Mr. Henriques

said that when he first came to the United States three years ago, he spoke no English and, unable to communicate with customers, had to work in a restaurant kitchen. Then his brother told him about Language ETC “and all the very good teachers there.”

“I have taken all the classes from Basic A to Advanced,” he said. “Soon, I will work to get my high school diploma and go to college. Thank you all for helping my school.”

Ms. Herrera and Ms. Nouk echoed his sentiments. “Language ETC became my family,” Ms. Herrera said. “It was not only an English class. It was a place that made our dreams come true for our futures.” Chris Liedel, CFO and Executive Vice President of the National Geographic Society, presented each student with a world almanac.

Audience members were clearly moved by the students' words. “We had them as

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STUDENTS VISIT MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Volunteers sometimes augment the classroom instruction by taking students on short field trips. The trips expose students to places they may have never been before and gives them an opportunity to practice their English in real world situations. This summer eleven students and two co-teachers took a trip to the Smithsonian Museum of American History. The group traveled together to the museum via

metro bus, a learning experience in itself.

Upon arriving at the museum the group received a great orientation by museum staff and each student was given a map of the facility. Students were invited to identify areas that interested them and to tour those exhibits individually or in groups.

Several students were excited to visit the exhibit on American pop

culture. This exhibit contained a number of interesting items they had heard of, including Judy Garland's ruby slippers from the *Wizard of Oz*. One student remembered when he had watched the movie. Explaining the function of the ruby slippers to students who were unfamiliar with the film created an interesting challenge for the teachers. Students also

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**LETC Launches
New Website –**
www.languageetc.org

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It is great to be back!

It is hard to believe that I was first hired as LETC's Executive Director in September of 2002, nine years ago! Many things remain the same. Language ETC is still one of the best non-profits in the Washington area. The dedication of the students and of the volunteers make Language ETC a very special place. It is what attracted me to the position nine years ago and why I am here today. Another reason I accepted the position was because I knew I would inherit a dedicated and committed staff, and a Board of Directors that has the same vision for the organization as I do. LETC is a unique organization with a great model that allows us to be extremely successful with very limited financial resources. Our vision is to continue to improve our services and to expand our reach.

In just the past few months that I have been here we have many exciting things to celebrate. While I only worked with Ann-Lloyd Hufstader for a short time and was sad to see her go, I was very happy to be able to offer the Program Director position to Ashley Lipps. Ashley was our AmeriCorps volunteer and had been serving at LETC for the past year. She worked closely with Ann-Lloyd, taught classes and got to know many of our volunteers. Her experience at Language ETC made for a smooth transition but best of all she is truly dedicated to the mission and is extremely well qualified. She has a Masters Degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from the Monterey Institute of International Studies in Monterey California. You can learn more about Ashley in her article in this newsletter.

With Ashley moving on to serve as Program Director, in late August we welcomed Kevin Burgess as our new AmeriCorps volunteer. He comes to us from Texas via Syracuse University and after serving in the Peace Corps in the Kyrgyz Republic where he taught English.

It was great to arrive to the news that Language ETC would soon be receiving a \$35,000 grant from the Philip L. Graham Fund to upgrade our technology. The funds will help us acquire a much needed new phone system, upgrade our servers to allow us to provide better internet service, and buy lap tops and video cameras to incorporate in the classroom. I can't wait to see the videos our teachers produce with our students.

As a past Netscape employee, and the person who developed our last website many years ago, I am so proud to direct people to our new and very much improved website (www.languageetc.org.) If you have not seen it, please take a look. On the home page you will find links to our Facebook page, Network for Good (to make a donation) and to a new link for GoodSearch/GoodShop. GoodSearch is a Yahoo-powered search engine that allows you to designate a charity so that every time you do a search LETC receives a donation. If you use GoodShop.com to do your shopping, up to 30% of each purchase will support LETC. I want to thank all the LETC staff who contributed to the development of the website, with a special thanks to Steven White and Antonio Ricci who worked closely with our talented website developer Jon Spooner.

As you can see, there really are a lot of wonderful new things happening at LETC. The best thing that is happening at LETC however, has been going on for almost 20 years. Hundreds of students are learning English and increasing their computer skills and as a result, they are truly improving their lives; and hundreds of volunteers continue to dedicate their time to ensuring we meet our mission. That is always the best thing we can report!

Mercedes Lemp



New Program Director, Ashley Lipps

Ashley Lipps, Our New Program Director!

I'm so excited to begin my new role as Program Director here at Language ETC. Although I'm new to this position, I'm no stranger to Language ETC. I came here in August 2010 to serve as LETC's Literacy AmeriCorps member. Over the past year, I taught beginner, intermediate and advanced classes as well as instructed students in the Language Lab. I also coordinated the volunteer tutoring program and assisted our past Program Director, Ann-Lloyd Hufstader.

I'm excited to have the opportunity to continue to work with our dedicated students and volunteers. You'll see me in classes, observing teachers to learn more about their needs. I'll arrange and lead more trainings for teachers, both during and outside of class time. Check the Language ETC blog on our website. Our online content contains strategies and activities for teachers. Another thing to look out for is the increasing technology we'll be incorporating into the classroom.

If you're a teacher or tutor, feel free to let me know what suggestions or concerns you have. These will inform my ideas for future trainings, future blog

content and future decisions about classes here at Language ETC. You'll find me in our main office and you can also call or email.

I'll also continue to work with our students to take advantage of their feedback, including holding student council meetings. They are also welcome to come to me whenever they have any suggestions.

Over the past year I have been so impressed with the dedication of our students. Even though most of them have so many commitments outside of class and arrive tired and overworked, they take advantage of our small class sizes and participate as if they had all the energy in the world. Volunteers often cite how invigorated they feel after working with a student or a class, but something tells me the students feel the same way about their teachers and tutors. Without so many talented individuals committing their time every week to volunteer at Language ETC, none of this would be possible. I'm honored to support our volunteers and students in order to promote Language ETC's mission of improving immigrants' lives.

A small contribution goes a long way at Language ETC.

Donate through www.languageetc.org (Click on Network for Good on the home page) or use this form. Student tuition is only \$120 for a three month term. Your contribution enables us to offer classes at these low prices and provide scholarships whenever needed.

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Improving the lives of immigrants through education.



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"LANGUAGE ETC, THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP!"

I came to the USA in 2005 and started working at a restaurant as a dishwasher. When I started working, I didn't speak any English and a

co-worker told me about English classes at Language ETC. I was very interested and I decided to go to the school. When I started, I was at Level 1B. That was two-and-a-half years ago. Now, I am on the Advanced level. But, I had to leave school this term because of my work.

At Language ETC, I learned a lot to help me in my work. I started as a dishwasher, then, I became a busboy, and now I have been promoted to be a full-fledged waiter. Language ETC helped me a lot. The teachers at the school work very hard so that each student learns. The tutoring services are very helpful. When somebody can't understand in the classroom, we go back with the tutors to review the lesson. And because the restaurant owners think it is very important to learn English, they let my tutor come to the restaurant for lessons in between school terms.

Now I have a better position at work, I have a better salary, and I feel happy because I can help my family. Therefore, I hope I can continue my studies at Language ETC to improve my English more. Language ETC, thanks for all your help!

Sincerely, *Sarbelio Torres*

NOTE FROM SARBELIO'S TUTOR:

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to tutor a student as committed as Sarbelio, to work with his wonderful teachers, and to watch his confidence and competence in English grow along with his professional status. Because of his increasing job responsibilities, he had to leave class this term. But, I hope that he will be able to return to Language ETC in the next term, not just to continue with the excellent English instruction he receives at the school, but also for the warm and caring community spirit we all feel there and the importance of the work we do.

Mary Gawronski



Sarbelio Torres and his tutor,
Mary Gawronski

GALA *Continued from Page 1*

students when they could barely whisper a sentence in class," said former LETC teacher Harriet Stonehill. Hearing them speak so eloquently before so large a group was "the best reward any teacher could hope for," she said.

Mr. Liedel told the crowd that, with their common goals of celebrating diverse cultures while uniting individuals through a common language, "National Geographic and LETC are a perfect fit for a partnership." National Geographic has generously donated fifty gently used computers to the school.

Guests sampled margaritas donated by Fortune Brands and nibbled on delicacies from around the world provided by the caterer, Sodexo. They were also invited to participate in a trivia contest, which included such brain teasers as "How many languages have been spoken by LETC students since 2002?" and "Approximately how many students does LETC serve each year?" (The answers: 56 and 1600.) The winner, who received an almanac donated by National Geographic, told the crowd that as a result of the event, she had decided to become a volunteer teacher.

Heartfelt thanks to National Geographic Society, Beverly Rezneck Photography, Sodexo, and Fortune Brands for helping to make this year's gala such a resounding success.

STUDENTS VISIT MUSEUM *Continued from Page 1*



LETC summer students at the Museum of Natural History.

visited an exhibit on American Presidents and First Ladies, as well as one describing a history of US military conflicts from the Revolutionary War to the present time. The trip to the museum provided excellent topics for conversation in class afterwards. All who participated agreed that the experience really inspired students and created a wonderful learning opportunity in a new environment. Many of them enjoyed it so much that they plan to visit the museum again on their own.

We give special thanks to co-teacher Eileen Keefe for organizing the trip.

WHO
WE
ARE

SCHEDULE

With nearly 2000 students annually,

LETC provides practical and affordable English language education in a diverse and welcoming environment. Our proven student-teacher partnership approach to education removes barriers, giving students the confidence to fully participate at home, work and in society. Our small classes with two teachers and extra-curricular activities empower students to become self-sufficient.

As a leading, nonprofit school and advocate for adult education in the Washington, DC region, our volunteer teachers help our students achieve success. With 70% of our students improving at least one literacy level each year, we have greatly exceeded the national average of 40%.

Our organizational focus is the successful integration of each individual immigrant into his or her community. Students come from 75 different countries on five continents, bringing different backgrounds and life experiences.

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE!
www.languageetc.org

Language ETC has new business hours!
We are open 6 days a week.

HOURS: MONDAY & WEDNESDAY: 1:30 PM – 8:00 PM
TUESDAY & THURSDAY: 9:30 AM – 8:00 PM
FRIDAY: CLOSED
SATURDAY & SUNDAY: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

IMPORTANT DATES:

SEPTEMBER 17: TEACHER TRAINING
SEPTEMBER 19: FALL TERM BEGINS
OCTOBER 10: CLOSED FOR COLUMBUS DAY
NOVEMBER 11: CLOSED FOR VETERANS DAY
NOVEMBER 23: LETC OPEN BUT NO EVENING CLASSES
NOVEMBER 24 – 27: CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING
DECEMBER 11: FALL TERM ENDS
DECEMBER 24 –
JANUARY 1: CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,
CALL LETC AT 202-387-2222.**

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