

# The Conversation, Issue 6, June 2022



There is no such thing as a summer break at Welcoming the Stranger. While we do hope to squeeze in a little sun-worshipping, a little beach reading and some backyard barbecuing, we will mostly be at work providing a short summer selection of classes and planning for the introduction of a hybrid program in the fall. **For the first time ever, we hope to offer both our volunteers and our students a choice of in-person classes or virtual classes.** During the last two+ years, we have learned that there are advantages and disadvantages to online learning. The energy and exuberance of in-person instruction is hard to replicate, but there is a huge gain in the availability of teaching materials and audio-visual aids. Class size is smaller in online classes, but the diversity of students is increased. In person classes give teachers more options for interacting, but the “click of a button” availability of more classes, on different days and at varied times, increases convenience for both students and teachers. In short, we have learned that one size truly does not fit all...and we will be working hard over the summer to develop and implement a two-pronged program that will best meet the needs of all of our students and all of our dedicated volunteers. We are very excited about this chance to expand our options and enhance the services we offer.

In other news: An employee of the **Nationalities Service Center** told our Administrative Assistant that immigrants and refugees would be limited in our society without the language skills provided by Welcoming the Stranger and he thanked us for what we do for them. The story below exemplifies the impact we can have on the lives of our students.

It's no too late to contribute to the

[Spring Appeal](#)

Which helps to fund all our free classes.

## New American Protects Our Watershed



Carla R. - Environmental Ambassador

After waiting an entire year to reunite with her husband, a remarkable young woman named Carla R. came to the United States in January 2020. Carla, who had graduated with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering, worked as a specialist in Bolivia monitoring water quality and educating communities about the condition of their drinking water through workshops. She empowered women by creating a network of indigenous female leaders and her work was published professionally.

Carla had learned some English in school years before emigrating, but realized she needed to speak and write with more fluency to advance her career in an English-speaking country. In the spring of 2021, this ambitious and hard-working woman began intermediate conversational classes with WTS. During this time, she worked with her teacher to create a resumé, asked for supplemental lessons to improve her writing, studied for her driver's license to travel independently, and found a job at a retirement community where she could practice speaking English.

Shortly after, Carla's Welcoming the Stranger teacher introduced her to an acquaintance who served as a director for a New Jersey-based environmental water company. Impressed with her enthusiasm and knowledge, the director asked Carla to become a staff liaison to the local Spanish-speaking population and sponsored her

application to AmeriCorp's New Jersey Watershed Ambassador Program. In this position, she educates this community about recreational opportunities and responsibilities in New Jersey.

Carla continued her English classes with Welcoming the Stranger for three terms. In January 2022, Carla began a program at Rutgers University to earn a certificate in Environmental Stewardship. She is currently starting an internship, where she will study invasive plant and animal species in New Jersey. At the end of the internship, she will write a mini-thesis.

Carla is absolutely thrilled to be involved with the field she loves passionately, and to help Spanish-speaking community members to take interest in, and work to improve their water source and the environment.

### WTS - New Citizens



We're proud to recognize our four most recent new citizens. These new Americans have achieved citizenship just in time to celebrate Independence Day. We welcome them and congratulate them on their hard work.

## The Heroes of WTS



If the key to modern heroism is the desire to make a positive difference in the world without any expectation of material reward, Welcoming the Stranger is truly a community of heroes. All of our volunteers are motivated by a desire to help immigrants and refugees gain the skills and knowledge needed to engage fully in all of life's daily activities.

Volunteer instructors commit many hours each week preparing for and teaching classes, often making themselves available outside of formal class hours to tutor and guide their students. We rely on volunteers to “staff” our committees and depend on their professional expertise and talents to advance the mission of our organization.

Additionally, without the administrative assistance of yet other volunteers, it would be impossible to maintain the smooth operation that makes our programs possible. WTS volunteers recognize the difference that kindness and generosity have made to their own lives and are dedicated to paying these gifts forward.

**Without volunteers, Welcoming the Stranger would not now be in its 23rd year of offering free English, computer and citizenship classes to the immigrants and refugees living among us. We are truly grateful for and beholden to our volunteer heroes.**

## June is National Immigrant Heritage Month



For National Immigrant Heritage Month this June, Welcoming the Stranger highlighted the stories and accomplishments of past and present immigrants in our community.

Top Left: In the late 1800s, Anna and Gottfried S. immigrated to the United States from southern Germany. They met in Philadelphia, got married, and raised their six children in Germantown. Their granddaughter, Ruth C., is one of our wonderful volunteer ESL teachers.

Top Right: Leonid M., who is currently enrolled in our ESL program, emigrated from the Ukraine in 2021. He loves everything that life has to offer him, being active, and exploring the outdoors with his family.

Bottom left: Shahzad D. arrived in the United States from Pakistan in 2016 and was granted citizenship in July 2020!

Bottom Center: Valentina K. arrived in the United States from Russia in August 2020.

Bottom Right: Wanqiu R. emigrated from Hong Kong to the United States in February 2020. She lives here with her husband, Mark.

"Immigrant representation is again significant in this year's New American Fortune 500 list.



**Over 1 in 5 Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants.**

When one includes the additional 117 companies founded by children of immigrants, the share of the Fortune 500 list grows to nearly **44%.**"

**Breaking News**

**NEW FORTUNE  
500 LIST  
SHOWS  
AMERICA'S  
ECONOMIC  
SUCCESS  
RELIES ON  
IMMIGRANTS**

Excerpt from Immigration Impact  
article by Steven Hubbard  
June 9, 2022

"The United States is a Nation of immigrants—shaped by the courageous people from around the world who leave their homes, lives, and loved ones to seek refuge and opportunity on our shores. Their sacrifices and entrepreneurial spirit have contributed to the rich tapestry that has defined the character of our country for generations. Since our founding, the very idea of America as a Nation of limitless possibilities has been nurtured and advanced by immigrants. During National Immigrant Heritage Month, we honor the contributions of immigrants to our great Nation and celebrate their profound impact...."

For the full text, please [click here](#).

**To make a donation, please click below. Thank you!**