

Newsletter

August 2010

TTN VOLUNTEERS

When the WANY team wanted to test conversation groups for adult immigrants, we discovered the perfect partner in the New York chapter of The Transition Network (or TTN). For more information about the organization check out their website at www.thetransitionnetwork.org. This national organization is a vibrant network of women over 50 who support each other, share information and promote involvement in civic activities.

Eighteen women began working with Kayhan Irani to learn about WANY, pilot activities to help people practice English and develop techniques to keep the conversation flowing. In late 2009, eleven TTN members launched six conversation groups of adults from eighteen countries speaking nine different languages. Volunteers tested various exercises to encourage conversation and gave feedback on what did/didn't work. With participants, they created best practices for increasing conversation. Through trial and error, TTN volunteers helped shape the curriculum facilitators use today. "It was great to pilot the program because we played with pieces of the program while contributing", explained TTN member Livia Yanowicz.

Rather than rest on their laurels, in Spring, 2010, TTN volunteers led additional groups. And, they'll be back in the Fall, working in groups all over New York.

The Children's Aid Society

The Children's Aid Society was one of the first organizations to join the WANY Project. Established in 1853, The Children's Aid Society provides comprehensive supports to children and their families. Children's Aid sponsored seven conversation groups over the winter/spring of 2010, principally in upper Manhattan and the Bronx, working with more than 120 people.

Homemakers, who provide families with supportive services during times of crisis, met weekly practicing English and increasing their own comfort level speaking English to Children's Aid staff. Parent coordinators, under the direction of Alma Whitford, led groups at six schools, helping parents practice English. Embracing the program, the PCs quickly pointed out how to successfully follow the conversation group model with both entry-level and more advanced English speakers. At the East Harlem and Washington Heights Head Start programs, WANY was incorporated into ESL classes over a ten month period and the teacher created a curriculum for other ESL teachers to follow. In every effort, the Children's Aid staff enthusiastically embraced the WANY approach. And, in June 2010, 72 people received certificates from Mayor Bloomberg commending their initiative and dedication and contribution to the City after completing the conversation program.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

On June 25, 105 ESL teachers participated in an afternoon of professional development activities. The event attracted a cross-section of teachers, including many who rarely or never had used WANY in classes. At the day's conclusion they expressed wild enthusiasm, with 95% now likely to use the TV program. Sessions highlighted work from teachers who received mini-grants in 2009 to develop lesson plans around WANY topics. One of the most sought out sessions focused on using WANY with low level English speakers and showcased readers about various WANY characters.

In the drama and role playing session, participants used body movement to convey information and played different characters. A session on health issues included a 3-part lesson plan on



food and nutrition issues tied into the New Life Café episode. You can find these materials and more online at www.nyc.gov/LearnEnglish. Click on the "For Teachers" button to access the new classroom materials.

WANY WORLD CUP

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world and the World Cup celebrates the diversity of 3.5 billion *futbol* fans just like WANY represents the diversity of New York City. The WANY team hosted a viewing party for the game between Portugal and Spain to celebrate the contributions of partner organizations, volunteer facilitators, conversation group participants, and the student volunteers from the CUNY Language Immersion Program. Hailing from numerous countries and speaking multiple languages, these students spend one year in an intensive English program before pursuing further studies at CUNY. The 25 students who worked on the We Are New York Community Project epitomize the values of our program and showcase the diversity of New York City.

Look for the video on our [WANY Facebook Page](#).

GRADUATES

In June and July, 29 groups completed ten sessions of conversation classes and celebrated their success on the final day. Check out pictures from graduations throughout the City [online](#).



Our Lady of Mount Carmel

VOLUNTEER & STAY INFORMED

WANY is coming to neighborhoods all over New York. Follow us on Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/2apq2xy>. Twitter <http://twitter.com/WeAreNY> or YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/weareny.

Do you want to help New Yorkers practice English? It is easy: register at www.nyc.gov/LearnEnglish. Sign up now for upcoming Facilitator Trainings on September 14 or September 24. Or email wany@cityhall.nyc.gov for more information.