

MISSION MATTERS

The greatest gift to someone could be nothing to us

by Stephanie McKellar



I type this article with ease. I have known the language I employ to write this article for over 25 years now, and to communicate

via numerous avenues has become second nature. Not to mention, the English language being the second most spoken language in the world, it hardly seems like confidential information anymore.

Yet, there are 48 different countries represented right here in Dallas that still consider a grasp on the English language to be privileged information.

I am not a teacher by trade, but every Thursday afternoon from 12:30-2:30, you'll find me teaching English as a volunteer with Vickery Meadows Learning Center at their West Dallas to a group of 10-20 adult students.

Vickery Meadows Learning Center was founded in 1997, and has been teaching English literacy skills to the refugee and hispanic populations in Vickery Meadows, and recently West Dallas, for the last 15 years. Teaching students from more than 48 countries, taught by over 200 volunteers, VMLC is now a thriving 501(c)(3) program, and offers free English classes in the morning, afternoon, and evening four days a week, and also provides child care for those students whose

ability to come hinges on whether someone can watch their children for a few hours. While their parents and the adult students are developing the literacy to speak English as a second language, their children are learning life skills and being empowered alongside their parents on the path to literacy. Serving over 1,000 adults and 200 children annually at no charge to the students, VMLC offers four levels of classes, and also GED preparation and citizenship tests.

And they need you.

Operating solely on referrals from agencies working with refugees, VMLC still has more students than it can accept every semester. One of the best volunteer programs I've seen, a volunteer does not need teaching experience or a working knowledge of another language. VMLC provides the training and the curriculum. Each class is co-taught by two volunteers, and the lesson plans are provided so you only need to prepare a few pages for your two-hour class. The commitment is 2.5 hours per week for 13 weeks. VMLC also integrates a computer lab at each of their campuses, and provides a myriad of resources from games to flashcards - tons of ideas and tools to help

communicate the concepts in fun and engaging ways.

It is one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever been a part of - to be able to give the gift

of language, which evolves into the gift of reading, writing, and communicating with the world around them. The students that come to VMLC are wonderful: bright, eager to learn, and come from a wide variety of experience and exposure to the English language. They help each other. They laugh

and enjoy the learning process. All the while, you're giving a gift that you've had from an early age, and it is truly humbling to be able to give something such as the gift of speaking a language that hardly causes you any effort to use anymore.

Overall, they make it almost effortless, but definitely a lot of fun, for a green volunteer to step in and teach for the semester. The experience is certainly worth it, the students are a delight to interact with, and you are able to serve and love in a tremendous way that will aid your students forever.

To learn more, reach out to VMLC: <http://www.vmlc.org/pages/volunteer-teaching>.

"We live at the level of our language. Whatever we can articulate, we can imagine or explore."

-ELLEN GILCRIST

Help Share the Bread of Life

When our pantries and refrigerators are always full, its hard to explain hunger to our children. Sometimes the best way to help children understand the difference between "wants" and "needs" is to help them to see the real needs of others. Help make this Thanksgiving meal a bountiful time for the families served by Methodism's Breadbasket. As they provide a turkey to each client's family, UPUMC supplies the rest of the food a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

UPUMC has committed to bring 100 bags of food for the distribution on Saturday, Nov. 17, 10 a.m.-noon. Everyone is welcome to the distribution, and it's a wonderful

way to show kids the real meaning of Thanksgiving.

Methodism's Breadbasket is a non-profit emergency food and clothing organization of the North Texas Conference of United Methodist Churches. For over four decades, Breadbasket has been serving the elderly, disabled and families with children who receive Food Stamps. Monthly benefits are exhausted after an average of 2.5 weeks. Amongst their clients, 51% must choose between food and paying utilities; 46% must choose between food or paying for housing; 39% must chose between food, medications or medical care. Learn more at www.methodismbreadbasket.org

Return one of each of the following items together in a bag to UPUMC's collection center by Nov. 14:

- corn bread mix
- cake mix
- stuffing mix
- instant potatoes
- canned milk
- canned yams
- cranberry sauce
- corn
- green beans
- gravy



METHODISM'S
BREADBASKET
Sharing the Bread of Life

University Park
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
bringing faith to life

Sunday Worship

Nov. 11

24th Sunday after Pentecost
Traditional, 8:45 & 11 a.m.

Family Stuff

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17
the Rev. Matt Gaston

The Bridge, 11 a.m.

Sermon series: *This Old House*
Dr. Robert Foster, preaching

Nov. 18

25th Sunday after Pentecost
Traditional, 8:45 & 11 a.m.

Crazy Grateful

I Samuel 2:1-10
Dr. Rebecca Frank Bruff

The Bridge, 11 a.m.

Sermon series: *This Old House*
Dr. Robert Foster, preaching

Nov. 25

Last Sunday after Pentecost
Traditional, 8:45 & 11 a.m.

Christ the King Sunday

THY Kingdom Come

John 18:33-37
the Rev. Matt Gaston

The Bridge, 11 a.m.

Sermon series: *This Old House*
Dr. Robert Foster, preaching

Looking Ahead

Nov. 10: USNA Gospel Choir
Nov. 18: Carter Blood Drive
Nov. 19: WDS Grandparents Day
Nov. 20: WDS Grandparents Day
Nov. 20: *The Journey* Advent study begins
Dec. 2: Night In Bethlehem
Dec. 2: The Bridge Advent Celebration
Dec. 9: Festival of Lessons & Carols
Dec. 9: Church Christmas Dinner
Dec. 16: Chili Cook-off & Live Nativity
Dec. 23: Christmas in Song & Story

Member News

Births

Kathryn Anne Carter, daughter of Grant and Charlotte Carter, granddaughter of Lee and Martha Carter, great-granddaughter of Dorothy Carter, on Oct. 26

Deaths

Jane Barnard, mother of Joe Barnard, on Oct. 18 • Perry Morris on Oct. 19

Can You Spare A Drop?

The Carter Bloodcare bus will be in the church parking lot on Sunday, Nov. 18, from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Sign-up sheets are in the Connection Center.