

# English as a Second Language student at Catholic Multicultural Center shares her story

BY LAURA GREEN AND KAYA  
For the Catholic Herald

**MADISON** — Have you traveled to another country and not known the language completely? If you have, then you have some idea how many immigrants feel as they come to a new country and work on learning the native language.

If you have ever tried learning a language, you know how much time and effort it takes.

## ESL classes at CMC

English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at the Catholic Multicultural Center (CMC) in Madison serve language learners from all over the world to help teach what they need to know to get by and eventually thrive here in the U.S.

To date this year, the classes at the CMC have served 154 students from 28 different countries representing 16 different languages. Here ESL student Kaya, originally from China, shares her story about learning English at the CMC:

## I am living in USA — by Kaya

This is the longest time that I have stayed in the USA. And this is the most I have contacted Americans and Chinese in USA. Especially I met a large amount of volunteers! I found some things are very interesting.

When people come to the USA as an ESL learner, at that time, he can find that a lot of volunteers do their best helping him. Some volunteer is older, some volunteer is younger. In CMC, the teachers are all volunteers. Dean, Warren, Mike, Mary, and Deb . . . Mr. Dean taught us subjects about American culture and games, such as St. Patrick's Day, The American Dream, and Laws . . . I always take what he wrote on his board and copy it down. It's fascinating!

Mr. Mike worked in government before he was retired. He has been a volunteer for six years. He is very proud of the volunteer badge hanging on his chest. On the first day I met him in the classroom, I messed up



Above, Catholic Multicultural Center (CMC) English as a Second Language (ESL) Coordinator Amy Krill, left, is pictured with ELS students Kaya, center, and Tanya. Below, Kaya, right, and fellow student Susana in an ESL class. (Contributed photos)



the word valentine and volunteer. He was very confused by me, but still kept calm waiting for me to express my whole thought. I didn't think somebody could understand what I said. I wilted. I felt much better after Mr. Mike wrote the two words [I had

gotten confused] on the board. Thanks Mr. Mike.

Mrs. Deb is an elegant lady. She taught us some idioms, and played some crosswords with us. I liked it! She brought some books from her grandchildren, to teach us how to

## How you can help

If you are interested in helping Catholic Multicultural Center (CMC) English as a Second Language (ESL) students like Kaya, there are several ways to get involved.

The CMC is currently in need of more volunteer ESL teachers to teach a twice-weekly weekday morning class. A teaching degree, TESL or TEFL certification, or extensive experience teaching or tutoring English are required for this position.

Substitute teacher and helper positions may be available as well including for Saturday drop-in ESL tutoring; no formal experience is required.

The CMC always welcomes donations of supplies or financial contributions to the ESL program.

Finally, one thing we as Catholics can all do is to answer the call to "welcome the stranger."

For more information about the CMC ESL program, contact Laura Green: [Laura@cmcmadison.org](mailto:Laura@cmcmadison.org) or 608-441-1180.

practice the rhyming sentences. They taught us how to play UNO, sing a song, and do things like real American kids, although we aren't young anymore.

"I know, it's hard to learn English," they always say to me, smiling, when I complained that I made a mistake again.

Respect is the best encouragement. In CMC, they are so patient that they always wait to listen to us speak a sentence with calm. We are not their mission, but we are a part of their life, two hours or four hours per week. Doing something you like and doing something you should do are totally different. I think volunteers are great. It is an important power that makes the USA stronger . . .

I think that is why I feel that CMC is warmer than other schools. We are lucky to go to the CMC.

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