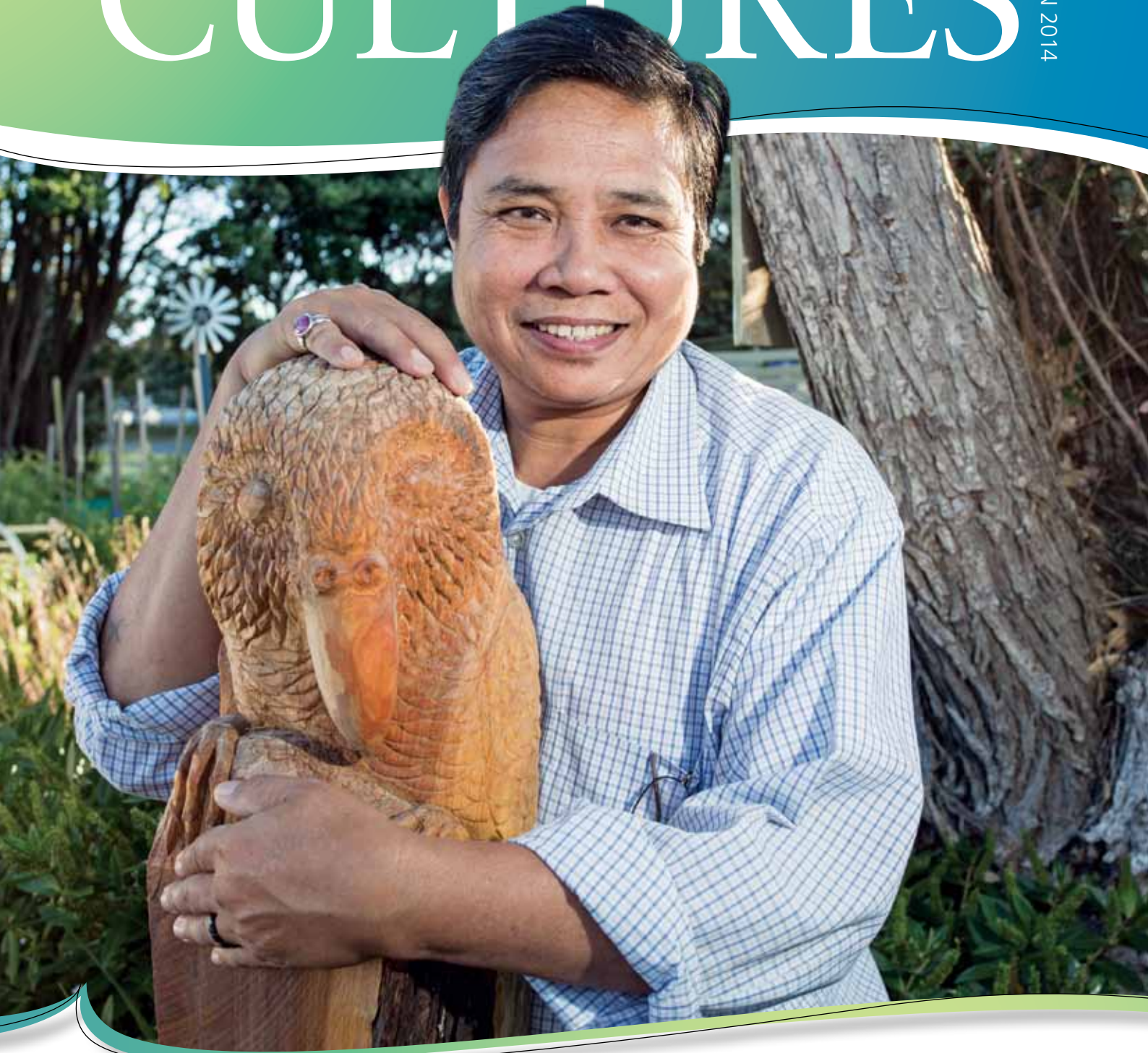


CONNECTING CULTURES

ISSUE 22 AUTUMN 2014



ENGLISH
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QUICK STATS

6,600 learners
2,500 volunteers
800 new volunteers each year
280 staff
23 locations

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Cover Tin Aung with his Kakapo carving.

Photo Antony Kitchener

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Kia ora Welcome

I'm delighted that learners at English Language Partners can now study full-time for a NZQA qualification. The New Zealand Certificates in English Language that are now being offered at Foundation Level 1, Level 1 and Level 2 create a path for low level English learners to higher-level study.

In this *Connecting Cultures*, Sharon Jiang, a learner from our first course in Auckland South, explains how the course has made a huge difference to her life in New Zealand. When she arrived from China, she couldn't converse at all in English. She now has the confidence to manage her daily life, and even gave a speech at her class graduation. She's made new friends and is looking forward to finding employment with her new English skills.

Employment is the major issue for most refugees and migrants. Therefore, it's an important focus of much of our work – whether through one-to-one home tutoring or class learning. Tin Aung, an accomplished woodcarver from Burma, is determined to use his exceptional skills here. He recognises that improving his English skills is the key to building a new career. You will find his story enormously inspiring.

Nancy Rounthwaite shares with us her amazing story of volunteering and teaching for nearly 20 years. It is people like Nancy, committed to ensuring new Kiwis feel they belong, who are the lifeblood of our organisation. Through their work and through the generosity of our donors and funders, we're able to reach newcomers throughout New Zealand.



Nicola Sutton.

Nicola Sutton
Chief Executive

Thank you

Because of your generosity newer Kiwis feel more included in our neighbourhoods and workplaces.

Please donate

Help more refugees and migrants lead the independent life many of us take for granted.

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or call 04 471 2382

Carving out *a new career*

Tiny delicate carved wooden figures stand on the shelves of Tin Aung's small studio based in the garden shed of a Porirua suburb. Patricia Thompson

A much larger carving of an elephant has pride of place in the family living room. At the Te Rito community gardens, his intricate work, including a carved archway and a striking kakapo, wrought from an old tree stump, is proving a real head turner.

After 20 years as a respected carver in his homeland of Myanmar and then in Thailand, Tin, who came to New Zealand as a refugee two years ago, is working to rebuild his career here.

His exceptional skill, experience and ability to carve in intricate detail ensures that he is at home carving anything, from religious statuettes, to New Zealand native creatures. His sketchbook currently includes a design for a tuatara.

He has already exhibited some of his work, including a carved wall panel of a Kapiti seascape, at a joint exhibition at the Coastlands shopping mall in Paraparaumu.

However, he recognises that improving his limited English skills will be key to helping him to find more work and commissions in his specialised area of craftsmanship.

When Tin first came to New Zealand, he joined English Language Partners' ESOL Literacy class, where his first

teachers were Sally Aylward and Phillipa Watt, the Porirua centre manager.

"Tin has amazing skills, he's very talented," says Phillipa. "He's working hard on his English too, because he knows it's essential for discussing ideas for carvings".

Tin currently takes part in classes run by the Multicultural Learning and Support Service.

"Before New Zealand I had no English. It is very hard for me to learn, and it is going slowly but I enjoy my English class and my English is getting better," Tin says.

"It is a mixed class. Some people from Cambodia, Vietnam and Nepal. We use a lot of body language to communicate."

Tin left Myanmar in 2001 because of the country's poor human rights record.

"In Myanmar, as well as carving, I also had a street stall and sold books about philosophy and music," says Tin. "I continued carving in Thailand. I play guitar and have often played at events and weddings."

Tin lived in Thailand for 10 years, five of which were spent at the Umphien refugee camp where daughter Ted The Re was born. She has taken ▶



PHOTOS: ANTONY KITCHENER

Tin Aung





Tin Aung with his wife Ma Wai and daughter Ted The Re.

“I can do any design and I like doing New Zealand carvings.”

► to school in New Zealand with enthusiasm and certificates praising her achievements are dotted all over the family home. His wife Ma Wai works on her English with her home tutor, Janet Webster.

The local artistic community has been supportive, with potter Anneke Borren and traditional Maori carver Nathan Rei both giving Tin a selection of chisels to enable him to get established here. He has also received support from Paraparaumu-based carver Bodhi Vincent.

Tin donated his time to create the works at Te Rito gardens while on a two-week work experience programme there. The gardens are run by the Tātou Development Trust which helps people learn organic horticultural skills for home and the workplace.

However, Tin’s major ambition is to develop his carving career here. He is

happy to carve in any style and says he would like the opportunity to do more New Zealand-style commissions.

Small wood carvings take one or two days to complete and he is gradually learning which woods available in New Zealand are best for carving purposes.

“I can do any design and I like doing New Zealand carvings,” he says. “But I want to learn more about the kind of carvings people in New Zealand want.” 🌿

To contact Tin Aung, email porirua@englishlanguage.org.nz

Help a refugee like Tin to learn English. Make a donation at www.englishlanguage.org.nz/donate



Talking drums

Alexis Ferguson and Younghee An are both migrants and besides learning about the Kiwi culture, they share a passion: playing and teaching traditional drumming. Martine Rolls



Alexis Ferguson and Younghee An

Younghee and Alexis both came to Christchurch first, but they didn't meet until they were teamed up as volunteer teacher and learner by English Language Partners in Tauranga just a few months ago. When they met in October, they found they have a shared passion for playing and teaching drums.

"Traditional Scottish drumming is not that different from Korean drumming. The drums are different, but music is

the same everywhere. We both speak drum," says Alexis.

Alexis arrived in New Zealand seven years ago. She left her native Clydebank in West Dunbartonshire, Scotland, after replying to an ad in a pipe band magazine for a drumming instructor in Christchurch.

"It was the dodgiest looking ad ever, and it took them forever to get back to me, but I had a good feeling about it," she says.

Alexis also registered an interest in becoming an air traffic controller for the Royal Air Force but at the time they called her up for training, the reply from Christchurch also came.

"Sometimes I wonder what my life would have been like now if I had joined the RAF, but I am happy where I am, doing what I do," she says.

Alexis is an experienced Highland pipe band drumming tutor. She teaches the National Youth Pipe ▶



PHOTOS: CHRIS PARKER

▶ band and many others, and even organises lessons using Skype.

“I like it that Alexis is young, and uses the internet a lot during our meetings,” Younghee says.

“We learn things together. We searched information about the background of Labour Day on Google, and we looked up what a Jacaranda tree is,” Alexis adds.

“You don’t see them in the South Island but they are all over the place in Tauranga.”

Younghee has been in New Zealand for nine years. Her mother travelled here to visit her sister, and bought a house in Christchurch. When she came back, she asked Younghee and her siblings if they wanted to live in New Zealand, as there was a house available for them.

Younghee didn’t hesitate to put her hand up for that opportunity. She comes from Seoul, the capital and largest metropolis of South Korea. The city has a population of more than 10 million people and compared to that, Tauranga is no more than a village.

“There are similarities, though. Like the way you can fish off the wharf,” Younghee says.

Younghee has a passion for traditional Korean drumming, which is something she shares with her two sons. They have a collection of about 40 drums in the garage of their Welcome Bay home. She has been a freelance drumming teacher for many years, and now teaches drumming at the Korean School in Tauranga.

“People like Younghee are really motivated to learn, and that makes teaching rewarding.”

Alexis never envisaged teaching anything but drums, but when she heard about English Language Partners, she was keen to find out about volunteering.

“I had my training in Timaru, and it was really interesting. It was fun to meet so many different people and although I always said I would not teach anything else but drumming, I’m glad I made the decision to teach English,” Alexis says.

“People like Younghee are really motivated to learn, and that makes teaching rewarding.”

When Alexis came in, the ‘too hard’ basket was burned in the fire. Younghee says she thinks she has learned more about apostrophes than most Kiwis will ever know since teaming up with Alexis.

“When I came here, I was like an empty box. I could say words like ‘hi’, ‘hello’ and ‘excuse me’, but that was pretty much it.”

Alexis mentions that her New Zealand residency has only just been approved.

“I had to pay another migrant fee to get the status finalised, and guess what? Some of that money goes to ESOL services. How funny is that?”

People joke around and say to Alexis that now she’s officially a Kiwi, she has to work on it and start wearing jandals, but she says that’s not going to happen anytime soon. “Jandals don’t agree with my toes!”

To Younghee, being in New Zealand is like being on holiday. “It is like I’m having a nice holiday,” she says. “I work hard, and I study hard, but the stress is gone.” ✂

For more stories, visit
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/learners-stories

Encounters of the global kind

Connecting with refugees and migrants opened the eyes of Year 7 students to concepts that impact globally. Gill Davis

During social studies, students at St Peter's School near Cambridge had studied the plight of asylum seekers, and what leads refugees to leave their homelands. However, Merryn Lala, a teacher at the private, co-ed school, felt that talking face-to-face with people who had experienced this would make the information more real.

"I wanted them to get involved in their community, to understand how a range of cultures operate in our society."

She contacted English Language Partners Waikato, and the resulting thumbs up saw the students fronting up last December for the English learners' first visit.

During the session, the students split into two smaller groups for closer interaction with adult learners from two ESOL-literacy classes run by English Language Partners.

Learners come from Somalia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Columbia, Laos, Eritrea, India, Taiwan and China. Many are refugees, and Gayle Pearson, who teaches one class, says that some come from challenging backgrounds and can suffer from a fear of the unknown, post-traumatic stress and "their hearts grieve for those at home".

The visit to St Peter's was "an opportunity to practise what we role play, and use it in a real life situation," Gayle says.

St Peter's students had prepared for the occasion, with questions at the ready. Putting them into practice, some were shy, but others related well and communicated more confidently with the English learners.

"They had to think about how to interact with these people; they couldn't really understand that until they got there," Merryn says.

Under Gayle's guidance, the English learners had also prepared thoroughly and, although hesitant, could ask the St Peter's students questions, and share the important aspects of life in their homeland and culture.

They'd learned the appropriate vocab, practised the pronunciation, and sourced internet photos that portrayed their country and how they had lived.

During their search, Somali learners had found an image of Somali children with guns. The women were reluctant to use it; the men argued "no, that's how it is", Gayle says. "The women talk about 'before, before'. Not the horrors, not bringing bad memories to the surface all the time."

Consensus gained, two images were shown: one with the guns, one without. And these prompted two ►

Zara Porteous with teacher Merryn Lala.





Learners meeting with St Peter's students.

▶ students to ask the men about the fighting in Somalia. "There wasn't a lot of verbal communication, but a lot of actions – gesticulation."

It was important to get them talking comfortably, says Gayle, who was supported on the day by another teacher, two volunteers and a bilingual assistant.

"One man had a son the students' age and really made an effort to communicate with them. He's usually very reserved about speaking English."

The St Peter's students returned for another visit, and Gayle and Merryn agree that this time, students and learners were much more relaxed because they knew what to expect, and what was required.

"The first lesson was the icebreaker, the second lesson was a more natural sharing of cultures," Gayle says.

For two young men from Eritrea with very little English, the first visit coincided with their second day in class. But, by the second visit, they were joking around with the students, dishing out high fives and posing for photos. Gayle says they came to class the next day and asked, "Are the kids coming back?"

The St Peter's students brought books they had made explaining what it's like to be a Kiwi kid. "To help English Language Partners with resources and help the learners understand about us as Kiwis," Merryn says.

“Are the kids coming back?”

And they shared food from their cultures. "Food was one of those things that crossed the boundaries – having people say they enjoyed their food was having their culture affirmed," Gayle says.

The experience was good, they "really liked" it, the learners told Gayle. "We're still teaching some of them what 'like' means. And the young men say they want to do it every week!"

St Peter's student Zara Porteous, aged 12, says, "Now I know life is a whole lot more different for other people. It was quite impacting: they didn't have as much as we do."

"It's changed my perspective looking at how others live. They don't have the same daily life as us," says Rhiannon Thomas, also aged 12. "It makes you think before you go and buy stuff,

more inclined to make do with what you've got."

So moved were the students by the refugees' and migrants' stories they heard during their first visit, they decided to donate about \$1,000 to the ESOL-Literacy classes. This was money they had raised earlier, making and selling pizzas for a maths project.

The gift was totally unexpected, Gayle says, and was used to buy resources such as new teapots, USB sticks and Milo, as well as generally supporting the programme.

This year, St Peter's will donate surplus desks and chairs for learners to use in their homes.

Asked if she would repeat the visits, Merryn's response is a resounding "Definitely! I want it to be part of our unit this year". Her class picked up many skills; communication was just one of them.

"I hoped to pull a little empathy out of the kids towards the people in our world. Open their eyes to the experiences of people in our community." ✨

Support our teaching programmes by fundraising. Contact Ruchika Jayatilaka Ph 0800 367376 or email ruchika@englishlanguage.org.nz

From zero speaker to speechmaker

When Sharon Jiang joined a new course, she lacked the confidence to speak a word of English.

Mary Atkinson

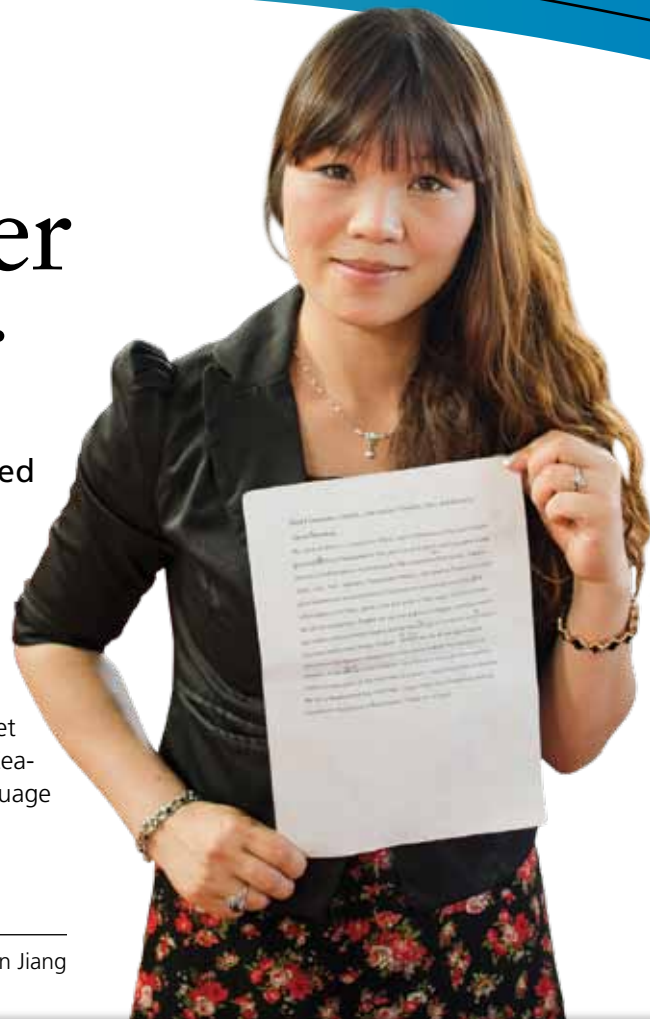
By the end of one semester, however, she gave a speech at her graduation ceremony.

Last year, Sharon immigrated from Guangdong, China, with her husband and school-aged daughter.

She had been in the country only four months when she enrolled in the pilot course. Not only was it Eng-

lish Language Partners' first full-time English programme, it was one of the first-ever to meet the requirements for the New Zealand Certificate of English Language (NZCEL). ▶

Sharon Jiang



Full-time English – *a new way to learn*

English Language Partners has broken into new territory. Mary Atkinson

Not only do they provide once a week and part-time English tuition, but now provide full-time courses that lead to nationally-recognised qualifications.

What's more, they are one of the first providers in the country to gain accreditation to deliver the new English-language qualifications instituted by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

The certificate programme will eventually replace the many varied ESOL qualifications currently available. Instead, ESOL students will be able to study for New Zealand Certificates in English Language (NZCELS). This system will provide students with more useful qualifications because employers and education providers will easily be able to assess a gradu-

ate's level of spoken and written English, no matter where in the country he or she studied. The six levels, Foundation Level 1 – Level 5, are comparable to low A1 through to C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

English Language Partners is accredited to teach Foundation Level 1 as well as Levels 1 and 2. The intention is that many students will then progress to Level 3 courses, run by organisations such as polytechnics.

Charles Hayward, English Language Partners' Strategic Development Manager, explains that the polytechnics are now delivering far fewer Level 1 and 2 programmes. This is one of the reasons English Language Partners is setting up a collabora-

tive project with Unitec in Auckland to deliver the NZCEL Level 2 programmes. These graduates will move into NZCEL Level 3 programmes at Unitec, creating a smooth pathway for students through the levels.

English Language Partners' Auckland South centre ran a pilot course in Manurewa during semester two, 2013. Students from Iraq, Vietnam, China, India, Mexico, Thailand, Afghanistan and Samoa enrolled. Their course load involved 20 hours of classwork per week as well as homework related to daily activities. Parents with school-aged children were able to attend because the lessons took place between 9.30 am and 2.00 pm.

The course was hailed a success by all involved, and ten students ▶

► The graduation ceremony in December was a special occasion. In her speech, Sharon talked about her gratitude to English Language Partners and her teacher, Cholena Main.

She also joined the other Chinese students in singing their national anthem. At the celebratory morning tea, a Samoan student set up a sound system and got everyone up and dancing.

This semester, Sharon is back with many of her fellow students, studying towards the next level – Level 2. Her classmates, from Vietnam, India, China and Mexico, have been learning English together since last July and have formed tight bonds.

Cholena is impressed with the way they have supported one another and have socialised together. They mix well during class and have frequent

“I’ve learned things for my life.”

shared lunches, where they enjoy sampling foods from their different countries.

“Sharon has also organised barbecues and picnics for the others,” says Cholena. “She is the unofficial ‘class coordinator’. This hasn’t been easy for her. In China, she would hire people to help. Here, she’s had to learn everything.

“She’s done so well. I couldn’t even have a conversation with her when she arrived. Now she goes out. She has places to go and things to do. It’s great.”

Sharon speaks positively about Cholena, describing her as a “very good teacher – we love her”. Sharon

can now say what she’s appreciated in learning English: learning to look things up on a computer, to go shopping and to make an appointment with a doctor or dentist.

“I’ve learned things for my life,” she says.

In China, Sharon worked in accountancy; here she does the accounts for her husband’s building design business. Ultimately, she would like to speak enough English to be employed in an English-speaking business. Her other goal is to socialise in English to make new friends, something she has already begun doing.

When Sharon completes Level 2 of the NZQA qualification she will be eligible for higher-level courses with institutions, such as Unitec, in Auckland. These intense full-time training programmes will produce graduates



Course members from Auckland South’s 2013 course.

► have returned to achieve the Level 2 certificate. Because of the pilot’s success, English Language Partners in the Bay of Plenty, Northland, and Dunedin have also begun teaching NZCEL courses.

“The course is filling a need,” says teacher, Cholena Main. “Four hours a week for someone with little English is not enough for employment or mainstream education.

“Confidence is the biggest indicator of success,” she adds, “and after one

semester, the students’ confidence has increased. They are able to talk comfortably with one another. It is a safe, stimulating environment, and the students are amazingly dedicated. Attendance is excellent.

“One student left for a job. She had just arrived from Samoa and had no English. After one semester, she was employable. This, too, is a success.”

Charles points out that the NZCEL courses retain the organisation’s focus on learner-centred, practical

skills, such as finding work or making a doctor’s appointment. While NZQA provide a list of conditions that must be met for qualification, it is up to the provider to plan the bulk of the course. English Language Partners’ syllabus is topic based and includes areas such as living in New Zealand, health, shopping, and education and employment. Students participate in field trips and have guest speakers.

Because English Language Partners is a community-based, not-for-profit

ready to attend tertiary courses and to gain high-level employment.

Hopefully, Sharon will be just one of many English Language Partners' students to take this path. 🌱

New Zealand Certificate in English Language

Courses are currently available in Northland, Auckland South, Bay of Plenty and Dunedin.

organisation, providing services to refugees and migrants, it is important the courses are accessible to those who most need them. So far, the NZCEL courses have been free to the students. The Southern Trust and the ASB Community Trust have assisted the programme. Doug McCaulay, from the Southern Trust, even took the time to attend the December graduation ceremony, to present certificates, and to stay on for morning tea to talk with the students, which they greatly appreciated.

English Language Partner's NZCEL courses are off to a strong start and have the potential to increase the organisation's ability to support refugees and migrants. This new direction is a significant step forward. 🌱

Thanks to the Southern Trust and the ASB Community Trust, learners were able to step up toward employment and mainstream education.



Chris Byun

Policing for a bilingual future

Newly-accepted police recruit Chris Byun credits perseverance and patience as the secret ingredients to entry into the New Zealand Police Force. James Fyfe

South Korean by birth, Chris says one difficulty in making the grade in his dream profession was getting his English up to scratch, something that was made possible through English Language Partners' new specialised teaching service: the Takapuna Language Centre.

"There are hundreds, possibly thousands, applying for the police, but the majority fail because they pretty much give up on their dream," says Chris, who himself was no stranger to setback in his quest to join the force.

"My advice to applicants is to get back up, just find a way to overcome obstacles."

For 23-year-old Chris, the first step in overcoming obstacles meant admitting he couldn't do it alone.

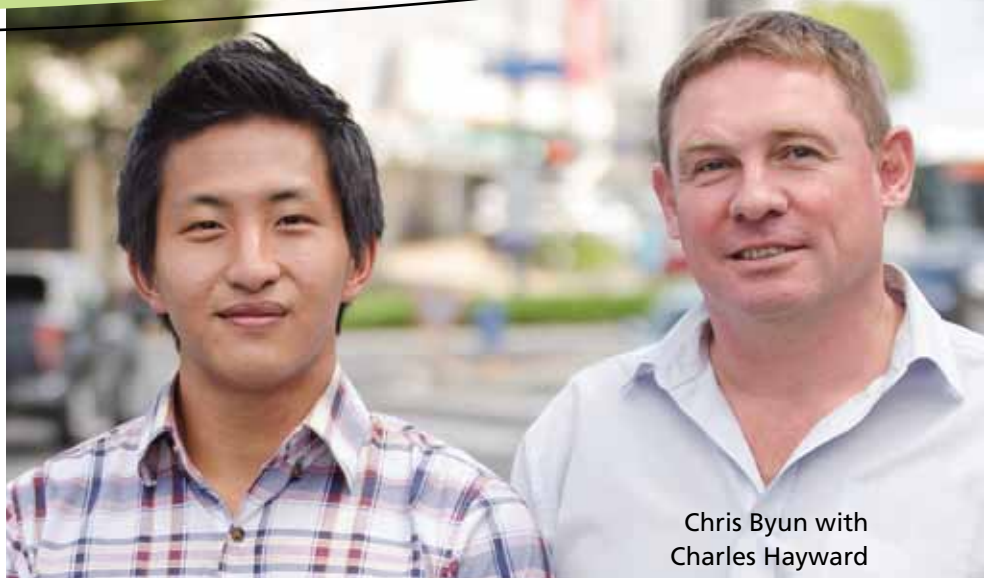
"When you reach a certain English level you need some expert help. I tried to do it by myself and then I failed the test again and that's why I came to Charles."

His teacher, Charles Hayward, says merely by seeking help, Chris demonstrated a huge amount of self-understanding and maturity.

"Coming for English lessons shows Chris recognised he can get better. Instead of waiting for it to come to him, he's sourced it himself. It shows his problem-solving ability. Obviously, the police recognised this, as well as his improved writing skills."

Charles says the learning was short-term and intensive, focused on how to structure reports and emails and write in police style, rather than on teaching new vocabulary.

"When you're teaching writing skills it doesn't need to be long and drawn-out – you can learn a lot quickly. Once you know how to structure ideas and what they're looking for in their questions, you can produce well-written answers. And Chris is a fast learner," says Charles.



Chris Byun with Charles Hayward

Chris's learning has not just been beneficial for him, but has also paved the way to teach other aspiring police officers the English they need to make the force.

"Chris has been really helpful for us, he was our first police recruit and what we learnt I have now been able to use to teach three or four others," says Charles, who drew on his knowledge as an ex-naval officer in crafting the classes.

He says he expects the programme to grow as the police continue to recognise the diversity of Auckland.

"Auckland Council tells us there's now more than 198 ethnicities represented in Auckland, so the police have quite a big job ahead of them, to recruit bilingual police constables who also understand the cultural aspects. Chris will be great for that."

Charles says the lessons are 'ultra-flexible' and can be catered to not just aspiring police officers, but anyone who needs to get their English to the next level.

"We can teach anything. Timing is not a problem, whenever it needs to happen, it will happen. We teach morning, afternoon and evenings."

The pay-to-use lessons have been a new addition to English Language Partners' core classes, which traditionally offer free lessons for refugees and migrants.

Currently, the organisation can only use the funds it receives from the government to teach permanent residents. Creating another income stream, Charles says, will allow them to offer more classes to people waiting to become permanent residents.

For Chris though, making it as a police recruit doesn't mean the end of the road for his English learning – far from it.

"The nice thing is, even though Chris has been accepted, he's chosen to continue studying with us, because the workload of police college is going to be full on, with lots of written report work required, so we are refining and polishing his skills," says Charles.

Even though Chris' career as a policeman is just beginning after a "long journey" getting this far, he says his improved self-confidence and communication skills now mean he can focus more on what's really important.

"I've always wanted to help the vulnerable."

And his message to others? "Nothing's impossible. You've just got to make it happen". 🙌

For more about tailored classes in Takapuna, contact Charles Hayward.

Call 09 486 6902 / 027 608 8111
Email takapuna@languagecentre.co.nz

PHOTOS: ANDREW LAU

Valuing *your* identity

Guest word: Kai Luey, Chair, Auckland Chinese Community Centre, organiser, 'Diverse Bananas, Global Dragons' conference

There have been many labels for the New Zealand-born Chinese of my generation: from the 'Ching Chong Chinaman' of my schooldays, to 'Model Minority' during my working career, and then to 'The Old Generation'.

Identity is a major theme of our 'Diverse Bananas, Global Dragons' International Conference 2014, as we try to lead the debate on our identity and the role of Chinese New Zealanders in the 21st century.

I was born in Westport and brought up in the Wellington-Lower Hutt region. My parents migrated from the Guangzhou area of China in the early 1900s and since we were 'unwanted aliens', they operated a family fruit shop business at various locations.

Because of this, we were actively discouraged from fraternising with our Kiwi schoolmates and spent all our spare time after school, on weekends and during school holidays helping in the family shop. For most of the time, our family were the only Chinese at the local school and, as a youth, I often felt isolated and at times hated my Chinese origins.

I graduated from the University of Canterbury with a Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical) degree with First Class Honours in 1965. I spent over 30 years as an engineer and manager in the electricity supply industry with the New Zealand Electricity Department and various multinational public companies both within New Zealand and overseas.

For the last 17 years of my corporate employment, I was General Manager and Managing Director of companies within the Morgan Dulmison Group based in Australia, New Zealand and Thailand and a Director for their operations in India and Malaysia.

During my working career in New Zealand, I found that progression in both public and private sectors was very difficult and frustrating for a person of Chinese ethnicity.

I felt I needed to prove that my performance, abilities and enthusiasm were far superior to those of my contemporaries to even get the promotions that I gained. Therefore, to advance my career opportunities, I immigrated with my wife and two children to Sydney, aged 38. I was appointed General Manager of a large company within four years.



My executive management career thrived in the international environment.

I have been very active in community work. For many years, I was heavily involved in Chinese sports. Since my return from overseas, I have become a leader in Chinese community affairs in Auckland. On a national basis, I was involved in the Poll Tax settlement issues and became National President of the New Zealand Chinese Association. I was awarded the Queen's Service Medal in the 2005 New Year Honours List for my community work.

My advice to my two children, who are both University graduates, and to all other Chinese youth, is to be proud of your Chinese heritage and to value education, moral values and family traditions.

With the trend toward global economies and the emergence of China as a major world power, opportunities have never been better for the true worth of Chinese New Zealand youth to be developed and recognised. ✨

Diverse Bananas, Global Dragons International Conference

30 May – 1 June 2014

University of Auckland Business School.

Visit www.goingbananas.org.nz for more details.



Nancy Rounthwaite

‘Can do’ style a winner

Nancy Rounthwaite’s learners don’t come to her for formal English language learning – they want to learn how to live and work successfully in New Zealand.

Alison Robertson

They want to speak English that will open doors and help them feel part of their communities.

Some of Nancy’s learners cannot read and write in their first language; others have been highly qualified professionals in their former lives.

To meet their needs, Nancy has developed her own flexible teaching style. She’ll teach grammar if she’s asked about a particular word or

sentence construction, “but I can tell they find it boring” and mostly they learn and talk about everyday issues.

Every Wednesday for the last ten years, in a voluntary capacity, Nancy has hosted a women-only group in her Hamilton home. “For two hours they speak nothing but English and the subjects we’ve covered over the years – gangs, childbirth, cancer, menopause, rape and abuse – you name it, we’ve discussed it.”

On Thursdays, Nancy travels into the city centre to take a mixed-level group. Her husband Rob goes ahead and sets up the room in St Paul’s church and then Nancy and the learners roll in. While they may not always stick to the lesson plan, Nancy puts effort into planning the weekly sessions “I have these flashes of brilliance in the middle of the night,” she says, and she uses resources from English Language Partners’ centre

“Don't let lack of language stand in the way of a conversation.”

plus her own resources she's found or made.

The first thing Nancy tells her learners is that it's okay to make mistakes. "I've had people too shy to speak. They may have come from a culture where it's frowned upon to get things wrong in the classroom. But once they have permission to make mistakes, they're usually away." It also helps that Nancy is quick to laugh at her own mistakes.

"I like to say I don't let lack of language stand in the way of a conversation," she says. And she's had some good ones. A discussion about breast cancer led to a woman finding lumps in her breast and taking herself off to the doctor. The subsequent surgery probably saved her life. "If people trust you enough to ask about something, then they must want you to talk about it," Nancy says.

Humour is also an important part of learning. One day Nancy dressed in gumboots, overalls, jewellery and tiara and announced she was off to see the Queen. "They said 'you can't wear that. Take off the boots, take off the overalls'. Then the class talked about appropriate dress for different occasions, like going to the supermarket or to a job interview."

Nancy has been engaged in both voluntary and professional work for English Language Partners for about 20 years, and has taught about 100 learners. "I used to do one-to-one teaching but now I prefer classes. They're a lot of fun. I have learnt so much, about festivals, celebrations and rituals, about food."

She gets her learners to record their language progress in a simple tick-box style form she designed herself. Her progress system is now on

English Language Partners' website, available for all tutors to use. "It's an 'I can do' style covering different situations, and students can measure their progress stage by stage." She says it works well and helps build confidence.

It all started back in the mid-90s because she had to get a certificate in adult teaching to teach CPR to community groups for the Heart Foundation. "I'd also been working with a Korean family from our church, and I realised I was actually teaching English, so when I saw an ad in the paper calling for volunteer home tutors, and because I had the certificate, I signed up."

Once she began, it seemed Nancy had a bit of a knack. "I have a good ear for understanding accents and I'm quite good at reading body language. I can tell when my learners don't understand something even when they say they do."

It gives Nancy satisfaction to see some of her learners confident enough to leave one of her groups and secure paid employment. "I've had people start their own business – a laundromat, others have bought a dairy, one's now working in a florist, another in a bookshop." ✨

In 2010, Nancy received a Hamilton City Council Civic Award for the service she's given to the local community through her work with English Language Partners.

Want to volunteer to teach English?
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/teach-english

Network news

Studying for a qualification - full-time

Tauranga's first New Zealand Certificate in English Language programme got off to a great start with learners from Chile, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, China, Russia, India and Bangladesh.



Showcasing ethnic languages

Palmerton North's cultural diversity was on show at an International Mother Language Day event. Activities included a display of a 1,000 origami cranes and calligraphy, paper cutting and national costume demonstrations.



Otago celebrates 40 years

Our Dunedin centre marked their anniversary by officially opening new premises. Atsuyo Tsukamoto, (here with Chief Executive Nicola Sutton) delivered a moving speech at the 28 February occasion.



Telling stories

“That’s what leaving a country does, it empties out the old life. Like tipping the bottle down the drain. Sometimes the new life fills the bottle again, sometimes not.” Alison Robertson



That’s a character speaking in Adrienne Jansen’s latest novel *The Score*, and while it’s a work of fiction, it is influenced by Adrienne’s experiences as a volunteer home tutor, an English Language Partners’ manager and her years spent living and working with refugees and migrants.

Adrienne’s involvement with English Language Partners began in Porirua in 1979. She had done some English teaching in Christchurch and Canada, and arrived in Porirua to find that there was a small adult literacy centre up and running.

“I set up the English language side and it took off. There were a lot of South-East Asian people coming into the area. It was an extraordinary time, and there was an enormous need for volunteer home tutors. Like them, I was new to the city; we’d all come from other places and really, it was all our children growing up together.” We organised group activities, classes, set up crèches, held potluck dinners and drove a campaign to pay a full-time manager to support those who needed help with their English language.

“Home tutoring shifts your head.”

“All the years I was involved with English Language Partners, and also teaching ESOL classes, had a huge effect on me. Home tutoring shifts your head,” says Adrienne. “Porirua had a lot of people who had big lives in other countries, but in Porirua those big lives often became invisible.”

As a writer, Adrienne began to give these people a voice. Over the years she has written many books, fiction and non-fiction, with migrant themes. Perhaps the most read is *Borany’s story*, about a young Cambodian girl and her family who fled the Khmer Rouge and came as refugees



“[ESOL Home Tutoring] has a transforming effect. It cannot be measured, but it is life-changing.”

Adrienne Jansen with poet Samson Sahele

to New Zealand. The story was first broadcast on radio in 1989 and published in book form two years later. Borany's grown up now, but her story still resonates, prompting responses from young refugee students in New Zealand.

Adrienne says *The Crescent Moon: The Asian Face of Islam in New Zealand* (a project of the Asia New Zealand Foundation) was designed to correct a lot of misconceptions about Islam. “Photographer Ans Westra and I spent six months travelling the country, talking and photographing more than 40 people for the book. We targeted quite specific and diverse people including a Pizza Hut manager, a butcher, a sharemilker, a social scientist. It was probably the most interesting six months I've ever spent.”

Adrienne thinks New Zealanders in general are very ignorant about Islam and we urgently need to educate ourselves. “One way is to listen to people's stories and experience, and books like *The Crescent Moon* give that opportunity. It also makes minority groups part of mainstream New Zealand. And if they appear in fiction, that too makes them mainstream. But it's also one of the powerful things about home tutoring, that we have the chance to sit down

and listen to each other.”

Alongside her own writing, Adrienne also works as an editor. Again, a lot of it is working with people seeking to be heard in New Zealand – like Ethiopian poet Samson Sahele, who also has strong connections to English Language Partners, and was a member of the Ethnic Advisory Group. Adrienne also collaborated with Farida Sultana and Shila Nair on their book *Purple Dandelion – a Muslim woman's struggle against violence and oppression*.

Safe to say, Adrienne's home-tutoring experiences have had a huge influence on her career.

“Over 30 years, I can see how transforming home tutoring has been in helping us to understand each other. It has a transforming effect. It cannot be measured, but it is life-changing.” ✨

Adrienne's new novel, *The Score*, centres round a badly broken grand piano and an assortment of tenants – mostly migrants – in a block of council flats. The book has just been released by Escalator Press.
www.adriennejansen.co.nz

Network news

Maori culture shared with migrants

Rotorua learners were welcomed on to Mataikotare Marae on 22 March. The day was an opportunity for new residents and local Maori to connect.



Celebratory poster

Acknowledge our country's growing diversity with this new poster. Available from natoffice@englishlanguage.org.nz



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