

OUR MISSION:

IHELP empowers foreign-born adults by providing individualized, in-home English language education and tools for effective navigation of our community.

OUR VISION:

A diverse and inclusive community where all immigrants are empowered through language.

2021
VOL.
20



Immigrant
Home English
Learning Program



GROWING together



Lourdes & Allison

Check out a video about their experience with program on our YouTube Channel!

It's been a fantastic past year at IHELP, with so many highlights to celebrate. During the second year of the pandemic, which has made keeping the connections between us all a bigger challenge, we continued to grow program and adapt the way we work together to make the most impact for those new to our country and city.

While there were many ups and downs, we have more fully grown into a program that can meet students and volunteers where they are and facilitate their work through a unique and flexible class structure. Participant pairs can work virtually, in-person with specific safety protocols monitored by staff, or in a mix of both. This is a help for the future as we can connect so many more people with this flexibility and keep classes steady through the turbulence!

With the assistance of all IHELP's friends, supporters, and champions we have grown to a staff of eight with a greater capacity to connect and support the growing number of immigrant and refugee families in our community. We have big plans for our next turn around the sun!



2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

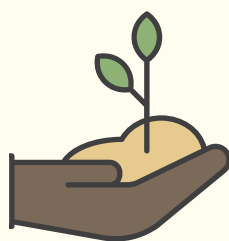


331

Total students served

104

New students joined program



364

Total volunteer teachers

137

New volunteers joined program



12

Students passed their exams to become U.S. Citizens



35

Devices distributed to students for virtual class participation



9

Group topic-based "conversation hours" for volunteers and students

In virtual, in-person or hybrid one-on-one classes

On topics such as legal resources, using the library, and the process of obtaining U.S. Citizenship

Education.

Empowerment.

Equity.



ihelpstl.org



[ihelp.stl](https://www.facebook.com/ihelp.stl)



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[IHELP STL](https://www.youtube.com/IHELPSTL)



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STUDENTS' AREAS OF ORIGIN IN 2021

Afghanistan

Albania

Azerbaijan

Bhutan

Bosnia

Burma

China

Colombia

Croatia

Cuba

Darfur

Democratic

Republic of Congo

El Salvador

Eritrea

Ethiopia

Guatemala

Honduras

India

Iran

Iraq

Jordan

Kazakhstan

Kurdistan

Libya

Mexico

Nepal

Pakistan

Palestine

Peru

Romania

Russia

Senegal

Sierra Leone

Somalia

Sudan

Syria

Tajikistan

Tanzania

Turkey

Uganda

Ukraine

Uzbekistan

Venezuela

Vietnam

Yemen



What have we been up to?

Here are some of the activities that students, teachers, and staff did to stay connected and growing in 2021:

- ☀️ The development and implementation of curriculum for students to use to study for their driver's test
- ☀️ Discussion hours, virtual get-togethers for program participants, a teacher appreciation dinner, and community engagement nights to reach new folks interested in IHELP
- ☀️ Continuing to provide a hybrid class structure where students and teachers can have in-person, virtual, or a mix of classes based on their needs

☀️ Staff continued our equity work and trainings to ensure we are always focused on increasing equity in our work and in our Saint Louis community

☀️ Our program staff and our Curriculum Committee began work on development of a financial literacy supplementary curriculum

☀️ We welcomed two wonderful new Program Coordinators, Rachel Pozzo and Meagan McGlasson, to our team to increase our capacity to reach more students and continually evolve program



Thank you for helping us to keep growing in 2022!

Rachel and Meagan

**TRIVIA 2022
RAFFLE TICKETS
STILL AVAILABLE!**

**Saturday,
March
12**



Winners need not be present

\$1.00 FOR 1 TICKET

\$5.00 FOR 6 TICKETS

\$10.00 FOR 12 TICKETS



**\$500 Raffle -
Winner
takes all!**

Click Here or visit

ihelpstl.org/trivia

for online raffle

purchase!



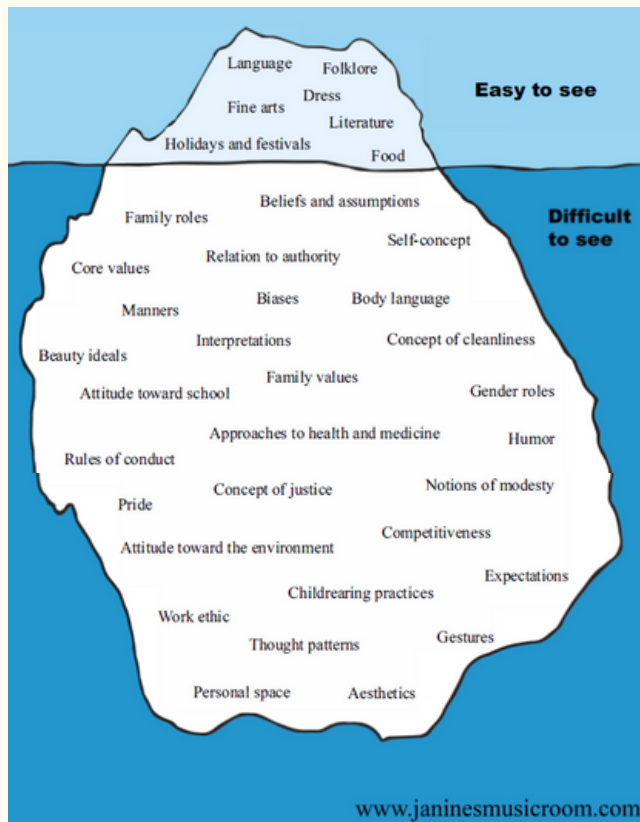
**Lottery Tree Raffle -
Includes \$100 worth of
Scratch-off tickets**

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN SAINT LOUIS

As the world watched the crisis unfold in Afghanistan last year, IHELP was inundated by both new and returning volunteers who wanted to do something to support the refugees who would be resettled here. Our volunteer orientations reached capacity as donations of furniture and clothing poured into our ISPN (Immigrant Services Providers Network) partner organizations across the city and county.

Now, with our organization serving more tutors and students than ever before, we are both humbled by and hopeful for the continuation of this overwhelming generosity. As of mid-December, only roughly 300 of the agreed-upon 1,000 Afghan refugees have arrived in St. Louis, and even fewer have been housed. That means the need for in-home English lessons and funding for our efforts will only continue to grow for these refugees and other immigrants in 2022.

With Afghanistan drawing the country's attention to the plight of refugees and immigrants from around the world, we will continue our mission of building community through English lessons for our neighbors - not just from Afghanistan or the nearly 50 other countries our students currently represent, but all of those that we hope to serve in the future.



THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

Cultural Humility is an important concept at IHELP and one that we continue to learn from over time. Working with individuals from all over the world in program, it is an area that needs to be addressed as we onboard new volunteers and prepare them to go into the homes of their student. So how do we know if a student's perception of time or expectations of personal space are different? The answer is we don't - until we get to know them.

Over the last two years, our volunteer orientation has been amended to include a Cultural Competency/Humility section to better give new volunteers more information on not only what to expect when engaging with others from another culture, but to encourage them to keep an open mind when making a connection with their student. Culture is complicated - and there is no one way people act or respond within a culture. We demonstrate this to teachers in an activity where they put themselves on three different spectrums: Time Oriented vs. Time Relaxed, Low Context vs. High Context, and Individualistic vs. Collectivist. We then discuss the differences between an individual's place on the spectrum and where one's culture falls as a whole. These differences also occur for students.

Outside of these perspectives, each place in the world has its own unique culture. We share a **Cultural Encyclopedia** resource with all teachers to give an overarching view of different cultures and provide volunteers helpful insight on the history, traditional foods, common religions, gender roles, politics, and other aspects of their student's area of origin. As the image above shows, however, most of the cultural aspects we learn about are from the "visible" tip of the Cultural Iceberg. There is much more under the surface to each individual that influences who they are and how they perceive the world around them. Cultural Humility recognizes the challenge of understanding all that encompasses someone else's culture but that it is important to be aware that there are many factors affecting our interactions. This helps us to build mutually respectful and cross-cultural relationships and continually learn- something integral to IHELP program.



Interested in learning more about volunteering with IHELP?
[Click here](http://ihelpstl.org/volunteers) or visit ihelpstl.org/volunteers



VOLUNTEERS SPEAK

Our teachers share their thoughts on program participation!



“I love to meet people from other countries, cultures and traditions. I don't have the resources to travel, so it's the next best thing! I want to help people feel welcomed here. I want my student to know that I value her life experiences and that I believe she enriches me, our community, and our country.”



“My student is now a friend, and I enjoy seeing her every week. I know how important these lessons are to her, and I want to help her reach her goals.”



“I absolutely adore (my student) and get so much out of being her teacher and friend. I see her (over Zoom right now) more than most of my friends and family. I wouldn't want to imagine my weeks without our classes.”



“Witnessing (my student's) drive to learn and her persistence is highly motivating! Knowing that the language skills she learns during our weekly meetings will contribute to the following is also highly motivating! Her agency; ability to integrate into her new community; ability to best care for herself and her family; her independence within her new community (e.g. she will be able to get done what she needs/wants to get done instead of having to rely on others' help if she doesn't want to); having more choice and more connections in her daily life; her overall contentment and feelings of safety; and feeling more settled in her new home is what motivates me.”

“I very much want my student to learn to speak English. She understands reasonably well, but she is mostly at home and has few opportunities to converse with people other than her family. It still breaks my heart that she and her family had to leave their country. I can't imagine going through what they did. They have become family to me.”



“My student and I have worked together for a while now, and it's been great getting to know her and her family and seeing her improve. Citizenship is a really big goal for her, and I want to do what I can to help her pass the test!”



“My student works very hard and is making steady progress. In a short time, she has taught me much about her culture. Also I admire the courage it took for her and her husband to leave all their family and love here, despite limited language skills.”

“My student is now a friend, and I enjoy seeing her every week. I know how important these lessons are to her, and I want to help her reach her goals.”

“I want to continue in volunteering because I love being a part of my student's journey in developing her English as well as helping her grow her confidence in speaking. I also really appreciate the conversations we have because of our different life experiences.”

“It's a rewarding experience to spend time with my student, learning from him and also (hopefully) helping him to meet his English goals. IHELP's program is very welcoming and accessible and makes it easy to get started.”

“It's very fulfilling to feel that I'm helping my student develop her English skills. It was a joy to be part of her journey to become a U.S. citizen in October.”

“My student is almost the same age as my daughter. When we talk, I feel like I am something between a friend and a surrogate Aunt; an older married woman who has already raised two children in the same community and school system she is now raising hers. I LOVE hearing about her journey as a woman, wife, and mother. When I moved to the area with a 2 year old and a 5 year old, I really valued having a next door neighbor who was about the age I am now! I hope, in time, my student values me in a similar fashion.”

Toast to IHELP



Zeliha shares her experience in program with the guests

Thank you to all who made our 2021 Toast to IHELP event so wonderful! For those who had to miss it, we'd like to share an excerpt of a speech given by our amazing student, Zeliha:

I came to America 5 years ago with my husband and my son... I couldn't speak English at all. I started with Cathy for my English and continued with Kat. I love my teachers. My teachers help me with speaking. They have patience, are friendly and sincere - thank you teachers.

The books are helpful. I am learning to speak English and know about American culture. Now I can explain myself in English, I feel good for the first time about English. I don't have to look for help when I go out...I can go to the pharmacy, I can understand the instructions, and make conversation.

I would like to thank IHELP for teaching us English. I hope they can grow bigger!"

THANK YOU WHO SUPPORTED THE EVENT AND FUND-THE-NEED TO MAKE EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING AND FRIENDSHIP LIKE ZELIHA'S POSSIBLE!

Awardees

5 YEARS OF VOLUNTEER TEACHING:

Jane Charbonneau
Shana Lawson
Marla Martin
Erin Schaefer
Sr. Jean Selissen, CSJ
Joan Weeks



10 YEARS OF VOLUNTEER TEACHING:

Mary Bayles
Debbie Gardner

15 YEARS OF VOLUNTEER TEACHING:

Mary Ann Eggleston

THE SR. ELISE SILVESTRI FOUNDER'S AWARD:

Sr. Barb Bitter, SSND



SPECIAL THANKS TO KAT, ZELIHA, ALLISON, AND LOURDES FOR SPEAKING IN OUR EVENT VIDEOS AND THE BAND, 'CATCHING THE WESTBOUND' FOR DONATING YOUR TALENT AND ENTERTAINMENT!

EMPOWERMENT ADVOCATE AWARD:



Sister Barb and Sarah Paradoski celebrating at the event



IN MEMORIAM: SPECIAL AND IMPACTFUL VOLUNTEERS WE LOST

*Your contributions to program and your students will live on for generations.
Thank you.
You are very missed.*

Sister Rosel Feder volunteered as a teacher with the program for 11 years, from 2008 until 2019. Over that time she taught 8 students: Aliya, Aynalem, Fatuma, Hasa, Heilay, Nadia, Farah, and Moadea.

Irene Kalnins was one of our earliest volunteers, and volunteered for 18 years between 2001 and 2019! She taught more than a dozen students including Mari, Fatima, No Jan, Tha, Anwar, Rajaa, Shilin, Hashima, Najaa, Hajima, and Basina.

Sr. Deanne Stratmann served on our board of directors for 6 years and served as treasurer for part of her tenure.



Sr. Rosel Feder, SSND

Sr. Deanne Stratmann, SSND

Irene Kalnins

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Giving Tuesday
November 30, 2021



We met our goal and raised over \$6,000!

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IHELPSTL.ORG/WAYS-TO-GIVE

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