The Portland Food Co-op is a wonderful addition to our neighborhood – and special to PAE because one of their first employees is a PAE alum. Idriss Kambeye was there when the doors opened on December 10th.

Idriss grew up in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and spent five years in South Africa working in customer service for technology companies and a hotel. He came to the United States by way of New York City, arriving in Portland in May of 2014. He quickly enrolled in writing, math and job skills classes at Portland Adult Education.

Since his arrival five months ago, he has worked as a Case Aid and Front Desk Volunteer at Catholic Charities which utilized his French and English fluency. He is now holding down two jobs, one at the Food Co-op during the day, and a second job at IA Printing. Idriss credits his success at landing a job working 40 hours a week as a cashier at the Portland Food Co-op to Deb Brieting, his job-skills teacher.

“She made this opportunity possible for me,” he said.

When asked about working in Maine, Idriss explained, “I like how we all work together and I have found a family working at the Portland Food Co-op.”

Matt Thompson, Assistant Manager, and Mary Alice Scott, Education and Outreach Coordinator at the Co-op, met with us. The Portland Food Co-op brings local producers and consumers together in a member-owned marketplace. They currently work with 180 local producers and have 7,000 local products. They have 23 employees, 2,700 member/owners and are open 9-7 Monday through Saturday, and 10-6 on Sundays.

Everyone is welcome and they do take SNAP cards.

To find out more, check out the Portland Food Co-op website at www.portlandfood.coop or visit them at 290 Congress Street. While you’re there, make sure to send our best to Idriss.
No one knows better than adults currently enrolled in college how challenging it is to balance work, family, and school. Fortunately, PAE has excellent access to these experts. Four alumni from the College Transitions program returned in November to offer advice and encouragement to current students.

Three SMCC students and one USM student, Xianxiu Xie, Van Phuong, Zakia Momand, and Lucy Shulman, joined a Maine Educational Opportunity Center advisor, South Portland's College Transitions counselor, and PAE's College Writing Workshop teacher in a great discussion with PAE students about what it takes to thrive in college. Some important tips include:

- Be aware that college demands much more work outside of class than PAE does.
- Make friends to share information and to study together.
- Seek out help from professors during office hours and from tutors available at the study center.
- Don’t go to college before you are prepared; the Accuplacer/TOEFL tests are not the only measure of whether you are ready.

These alumni experts have earned the right to offer advice. One of the students achieved a 4.0 average in her first semester; another matched that GPA and is applying to transfer to colleges such as Smith and Wellesley after finishing her associate’s degree. College may be tough, but College Transitions students are ready.
In the first year, over two hundred people contacted the New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) for information. Applicants included skilled foreign-trained professionals with experience in healthcare, engineering, law, bio-sciences, teaching, and finance/administration.

The program received funding from Maine Health Access Foundation, the Betterment Fund, plus the People of Color and Undapassawana Funds of the Maine Community Foundation. The Center’s accomplishments include:

- 178 people received services.
- 122 people received case management.
- $100,000 was raised with FPAE for programming.
- NMRC students also took advantage of other PAE programs.
- A website was established: www.nmrcmaine.org.
- NMRC signed an agreement to become an affiliate of the Welcome Back Initiative.

The NMRC will continue to develop and expand its services in 2015 and plans to seek continued funding from the Maine Legislature to extend the program beyond the pilot phase.

For more information about the New Mainers Resource Center or its services, contact: Sally Sutton, Program Coordinator, suttons@portlandschools.org or go to: www.nmrcmaine.org.

Evergreen and Nine Wicket Foundations each made generous donations which allowed FPAE to award scholarships that help students pay for PAE classes.

These scholarships helped students who had no other source of funding. The courses students pursued included: Certified Nursing Assistant, Medical Terminology, Medical Coding, Accounting, Basic Law, and Computer Basics. Many of these courses lead to a certificate which provides students with skills and knowledge to be competitive in today’s job market.

In the Fall term, FPAE awarded 24 students scholarships totaling $5,586. For the winter term 23 students were awarded scholarships totaling $5,441.

FPAE’s Mission
To raise resources and awareness to support adults at Portland Adult Education striving to become stronger citizens, employees, parents and entrepreneurs.

This winter, the English language learning lab at PAE is expanding its hours and scope. The lab continues to serve PAE’s wait-listed ESOL students. In addition, we are working with students currently in ESOL classes who want to accelerate their English learning. The lab works closely with the New Mainers Resource Center to support their participants as they search for work in the US. With new funding, the lab is now open 16 additional hours which allows us to accommodate students in the late afternoons and evenings. The lab continues to benefit from student volunteers who create a welcoming environment for all users.

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Sarah Robinson at FPAE friendsofpae@gmail.com
PAE’s new Basic Law class introduces students who are curious about legal matters, or a career in the law, to the U.S. legal system.

Students learn legal terminology, the history of law, and study the structure of federal and state legal systems. Guest speakers and trips to the USM Law Library and the Portland Court House enhance learning.

Our enrolled students come from multicultural backgrounds and include attorneys from Columbia and El Salvador, medical interpreters from Rwanda and the Congo, a mediator from the Congo, an interpreter from Somalia, and a US student enrolled in our Legal Office Certificate Program.

The instructor, Suzette Moulton, has an associate’s degree in Business and a Bachelor’s degree in Paralegal Studies. She is also a member of the National Paralegal Honor Society.

Juliet Eyraud is the Bowdoin College Volunteer Coordinator and a classroom-aide extraordinaire.

Juliet, a junior at Bowdoin College, became interested in teaching adults when she took a TEFL course and then taught English to adults during a gap year in Thailand. Later she had a summer fellowship teaching English and social studies to women in rural Cambodia. Her enthusiasm grew when she helped in Gail Burnett’s classroom at PAE in January 2013, through Bowdoin’s Alternative Winter Break. As a result of her positive experiences, Juliet became a regular classroom volunteer and eventually took on a leadership role coordinating Bowdoin volunteers at PAE.

Juliet admires PAE students’ ambitions and the supportive teachers who foster those dreams. She appreciates how difficult it must be for students to retain this spirit when many have suffered through unrest, war, family separation, and upheaval.

Because of some lingering effects from a concussion, Juliet is taking time off from Bowdoin to spend more time at PAE. She assists Gail in her class twice a week and helps Hannah McCain another day.

Juliet Eyraud and students Roselyn Nguessan and Jose Tchibangu.

She is also teaching a small class of non-native speakers at Front Street Community Center which is coordinated by Portland Housing Authority.

After completing her degree in computer science with a minor in education, Juliet hopes to find a career combining these two passions.

Juliet finds volunteering to be a great way to get out of the “bubble” of your own life and to see your town in another light. She has enjoyed becoming a part of the Portland community – something she might have missed without her involvement at PAE. Because of caring and encouraging volunteers like Juliet, PAE students have a better chance to meet their goals.
FPAE’s highly successful second year enabled us to supplement and support Portland Adult Education and its programs in some important new ways. Board Members and Coordinator Sarah Robinson worked together to expand our financial resources (see Year at a Glance) as well as FPAE’s membership. Our increased funding in 2014 allowed FPAE to support the following:

- Unified all PAE programs at the Cathedral School site.
- Improved the intake system to accommodate our ever-increasing student enrollment
- Established a $15,000 scholarship fund to support needy students enrolling in PAE programs.

The Board extends a heartfelt appreciation to the more than 150 Friends and numerous foundations who have made this possible. They are listed on the next page.

Rob Wood,
FPAE Board Chair

FPAE 2014 Year at a Glance
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