

Friends of Portland Adult Education

NEWSLETTER FALL 2019

From the FPAE Chair, Rob Wood



Many Friends of Portland Adult Education have inquired about PAE's response to the well-publicized, unexpected arrival of 450 asylum seekers to the Portland Expo this past summer. When they first arrived, the asylum seekers needed shelter, food, and safety. The Portland community, and the whole state of Maine, rose to the occasion. Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition, Hope Acts, City of Portland's Office of Economic Opportunity, and United Way of Greater Portland coordinated volunteers and resources. Elected officials, community groups, and individual citizens opened their wallets, homes, and hearts.

The PAE community rejoiced to see this public display of

acceptance and support. After initial needs were met, PAE assisted the Portland ESOL Collaborative to conduct a brief assessment and to offer short term ESOL classes at King Middle School. PAE also provided information for Portland Public School's presentation about education in the US and the process for registering children and adults.

At the end of the summer, the city transitioned the newcomers out of the Expo. Approximately 250 of the new arrivals settled in Portland. Between July and the first week in September, PAE conducted 533 intake sessions (including both new arrivals and additional intakes prospective CNA students). By comparison, PAE conducted 268 intakes during the same period in 2018.

Although the large influx of asylum seekers amazed the general population, the actual numbers of adults needing ESOL assistance is not overwhelming to the PAE. In recent years, PAE has admitted between 600 and 700 new immigrants annually. On two days in August, the PAE staff interviewed and evaluated 248 students (certainly a new record!).

PAE Director Anita St. Onge reports that PAE is adapting quickly to accommodate additional students. With FPAE help, she has expanded evening hours for the

learning lab and supported a new writing lab model. She has also found off-site classroom space. Both Portland Public Schools and FPAE have offered their resources to assist.

While the asylum seeker influx presents new challenges for Portland's educational and social service systems, it has also educated our community. The extensive outpouring of money, housing, and sponsorships have been gratifying to the recipients and to the providers who have worked for years to welcome newcomers. The new arrivals bring resilience, vitality, and skills to our community. It is gratifying that so many Mainers share this awareness. Thank you for your past, present, and future support for PAE students and staff so that our community can become stronger.

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Recent Events

Vision Day with Yarmouth Lions Club

On Saturday, April 6, the Yarmouth Lions Club, Portland Adult Education and the Friends of Portland Adult Education worked together to provide vision care to 23 immigrant students who lacked resources to pay for eye exams or corrective lenses. The efforts were a continuation of efforts started by Jane Cleaves, past president of the Yarmouth Lions and in whose honor PAE established a vision fund.

Teachers at Portland Adult Education identified the 23 students whom they believed had vision difficulties that impeded not only their school work, but also their daily lives. Lions Club members volunteered to provide transportation, including a van to transport the students. The dedicated members of Eyecare Medical Group, including 2 ophthalmologists and 9 technicians, volunteered their time to provide free screening services and prescriptions. With prescriptions in hand, volunteers and students went to the Scarborough Walmart Vision Center to fill their prescriptions. The store's professional staff were gracious and flexible.

By the numbers: 17 students received prescription glasses, 1 student was recommended for cataract surgery (covered by Medicaid), 2 students were referred to the clinic for glaucoma screening and 3 were given reader glasses.

A job well done!



Vision Day was a huge success, with 23 students receiving much-needed vision care at Eyecare Medical Group.



Joyful Giving to FPAE

PAE teacher Liana Wolk and her husband, Owen Marshall, pioneered a new way to be Friends of PAE. Their wedding registry invited guests to make donations for Metro passes. With their gift, we provided nearly 50 students with 10-ride passes this fall. We are grateful to Liana and Owen for their generous donation to our fund for students needing assistance with transportation. You can designate funds for bus passes when you donate on FriendsofPAE.org.

2,500 STUDENTS

1,737 English Language Learners

599 Job Skills Students

489 Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies Students

400 Foreign-trained professionals served

133 Homeless Youth

CLASSES OFFERED

347+



214 Academic & High School Diploma Classes
133 Job Skills & Workforce Development Classes
+ Citizenship, New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) Workshops, and TOEFL Prep

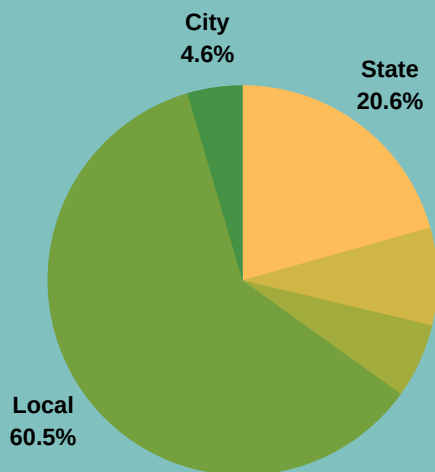


200+ VOLUNTEERS
6,481 hours of time

75% of New Mainers served by NMRC have a Bachelors Degree or Higher



Funding Sources



COUNTRIES 90 REPRESENTED



Federal
8.1%

Private Grants
6.2%



PAE LEARNING LAB

500+ Students served

134 Intensive online learning participants

123 for HiSet, Accuplacer & HS diploma prep

15 Multilingual Volunteers

2 Full-Time Trained Teachers



101

HiSet and High School Diploma GRADUATES

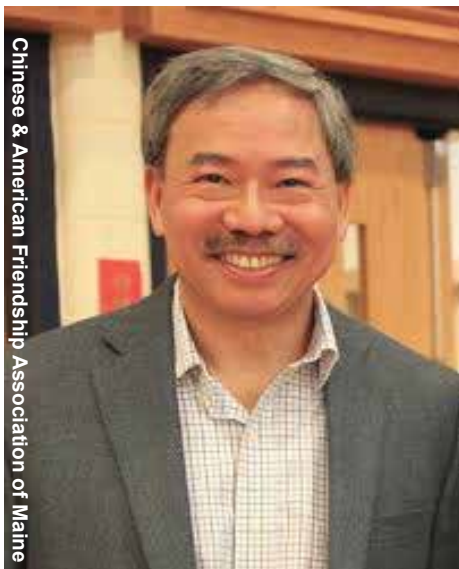
WANT TO KNOW MORE?



portlandadulthood.org
 Portland Adult Education @PAELearning

Successes from PAE

Volunteer Spotlight: Kwok Yeung



When PAE volunteer Kwok Yeung took the citizenship test in 1983, he was asked only one question: “Who is the president of the United States now?” For the writing test, he had to

spell, “I live in a house.” Kwok passed it easily by knowing that Ronald Reagan was president. The naturalization test has become much more difficult and is now standardized across the United States. In addition to writing a sentence, citizenship applicants must answer 100 civics and history questions and be able to understand and respond to college level vocabulary from the more than 20 pages of application questions.” As a PAE citizenship tutor, Kwok Yeung enjoys helping other English language learners gain their citizenship.

Kwok Yeung grew up in Hong Kong and came to the United States for college in the summer of 1968. He received his PhD in biochemistry and was employed by both Bayer Corporation and IDEXX. Since retirement he has volunteered at Falmouth Memorial

Library, LearningWorks, Preble Street, and as a citizenship and English tutor at Portland Adult Education.” When he first came to the United States, he knew his English conversational skills needed improvement. With assistance from his college roommates and friends, he honed these skills. Drawing on his own experience, Kwok has succeeded in connecting with students at all levels. His fluency in Mandarin and Cantonese has helped PAE students from China. Thirty-six years after taking his test, Kwok worked with a PAE student from Sudan, Arafa Mohamed, as she prepared for her citizenship test this September. With Kwok’s help, Arafa excelled on all aspects of the test and took her oath of allegiance on September 27th.

Education Academy Results



Jean Pierre A. graduated in Spring 2019 from the first Education Academy. He was hired as a teacher and program associate at Portland Adult Education in July. Welcome, Jean Pierre!

As we begin our second round of NMRC’s Education Academy, we want to share the students’ successes from our first cohort which graduated last spring. The Education Academy’s pilot program was an intensive 195 hours, which included a 45 hour practicum experience in a Portland Public School classroom. Eleven students completed all necessary requirements in four different subject areas: Introduction to Education in the U.S., Teaching Students with Exceptionalities, Classroom Management, and Teaching Methods.

During the program and following graduation, the students worked tirelessly with Sally Sutton, NMRC Program Coordinator, to complete

evaluations of their foreign credentials, take necessary exams, coordinate with Portland Public Schools and other partner agencies, and to apply for jobs. As a result, 10 of the 11 graduates are now working in the local school system. Three Education Academy graduates are working as certified teachers in subjects ranging from Arabic to High School Science. Other positions include Education Technician III and Adult Education Vocational Ed Teacher. We are astounded by the experience and skills of our graduates and so appreciative of the strong commitment by Portland Public Schools to this program. Be on the look-out for updates from Education Academy’s second year.



Common Threads of Maine

In the summer of 2019 FPAE agreed to be the fiscal sponsor of Common Threads of Maine. Since then, Common Threads founder and executive director Dory Waxman has raised more than \$35,000 to support this wonderful workforce training project. The following is her report.

When you trace millions of refugee journeys around the world, you find common threads, beginning with a flight to safety, a fight for survival; and arriving in any place where there is hope and help, compassion and community to begin again.

Common Threads of Maine welcomes anyone wanting to learn the art, skill and soul it takes to become a seasoned textile

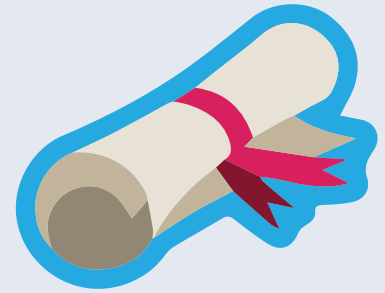
stitcher. We provide the tools necessary to seamlessly move into a good job with contextualized English and math as well as job ready skills.

We welcomed their tenth class on September 11, 2019 and are proud to say that over 75 graduates are gainfully employed as professionals in the textile industry and making their own dreams to come true.

Visit www.commonthreadsmaine.org for more information.

“Thanks to FPAE for all of the support and for being our fiscal sponsor as we continue to try and change the world - one thread at a time!” Dory says.

PAE Course Scholarships



During the past school year FPAE awarded **109** students scholarships for **351** PAE courses for a total of **\$23,414**. Most of these students were asylum seekers who wished to improve their American job skills so they could gain employment in their previous fields of expertise. The vast majority of these students start working immediately after receiving American working papers.

The Evergreen Foundation and an individual FPAE donor provided most of these funds.



C. Love Cookie continues to strongly support FPAE throughout



the year. Every month Katherine Slevin, master cookie maker and owner, contributes a percentage of profits to FPAE. Last year this amounted to more than \$1800. Other recipients of Katherine's passion are the Root Cellar and the Way of Life Mission. Great cookies can be ordered at c.lovecookieproject@gmail.com.

More PAE News

Portland Trails Field Trip

by Shoshana Hoose, Teacher

My classes took their field trips on Portland Trails. The ESOL4 class joined us, and we filled up a school bus for our trip to the Presumpscot River preserve. Both trips were big hits with the students. They learned new vocabulary, and completed writing assignments about what they learned. They also discovered places where they can return with their families and friends to enjoy the quiet right in the city. Three volunteers from Maine Audubon joined us to help as guides.

Thanks so much to FPAE for making it possible, and for making the whole application process so quick and easy. We are very fortunate to have the organization supporting teachers.



Photo by Portland Trails

Student Voice and Leadership in Portland



Axels Samuntu has represented PAE over the past year on the Portland Board of Education

On November 6, 2018, students at PAE elected their first representative to the Portland Board of Education. Axels Samuntu has represented PAE over the past year, serving on the Finance Committee and providing a voice for PAE students. He reported on PAE activities and voiced our concerns on the budget and policies being considered by the Board.

In order to increase student voice and leadership, PAE established a student leadership working group. With assistance from FPAE, we obtained a grant from the Maine Community Foundation's Undapassawana Fund to establish a Student Leadership Development Program, a new skill-building program for Portland Adult Education students who want to become leaders within PAE and ultimately within the Portland community. The

program will provide students access to classes, workshops, and professionals focused on strengthening the following leadership skills in students: public speaking, debate, communication, and professionalism/ professional growth.

Students involved in the Student Leadership Development Program will serve as advocates and communicators within and outside of the school and will have access to opportunities to network and grow professionally. Funds will be used to hire a student intern and to stipend a faculty advisor.

Briana Bizier, a teacher at PAE, has agreed to become the faculty advisor, and we are currently seeking a student intern. PAE looks forward to its second PAE representative to the Portland Board of Education. Yangala Magalie Mangasa (Magalie) will be sworn in on December 2nd.

A Student Letter

A student wrote the following letter this week, which voices what many graduates express about their time at PAE. Students like Christ Mavi see your work supporting PAE and value it deeply.

*Gratefully,
Anja*

Through this letter, I want to thank Portland Adult School for helping me reach this level.
From now on, I feel hopeful to pursue my dreams, goals, and move forward.
Portland Adult School's contribution in my life is priceless

Portland Adult School is a safe place to learn
Portland Adult School offers opportunities to anyone who wants to be successful
No matter where you are from
No matter your skin color
No matter your background
Portland Adult School is available to welcome you.

PAE is available to guide, assist, and show you safe and good ways that lead to success
Many of us came to here hopeless but end up with hope and degrees in pocket
PAE does not only stand on the education process but also contributes actively in the integration process of New Mainers coming from different corners of the globe.

PAE welcomes every single year, people with zero background.
However, what is true is Portland Adult School has its own way to give you a new identity
That is what my friends and I are today.
PAE has only a small building but you cannot imagine the number of folks it has been transforming lives.
PAE is an undeniable source, which contributes in the workforce of the state of Maine
PAE has broken many people's barriers, created hope and paved the way to Success

PAE has wonderful and incredible partners who do a priceless job every single day in all respect and professionalism

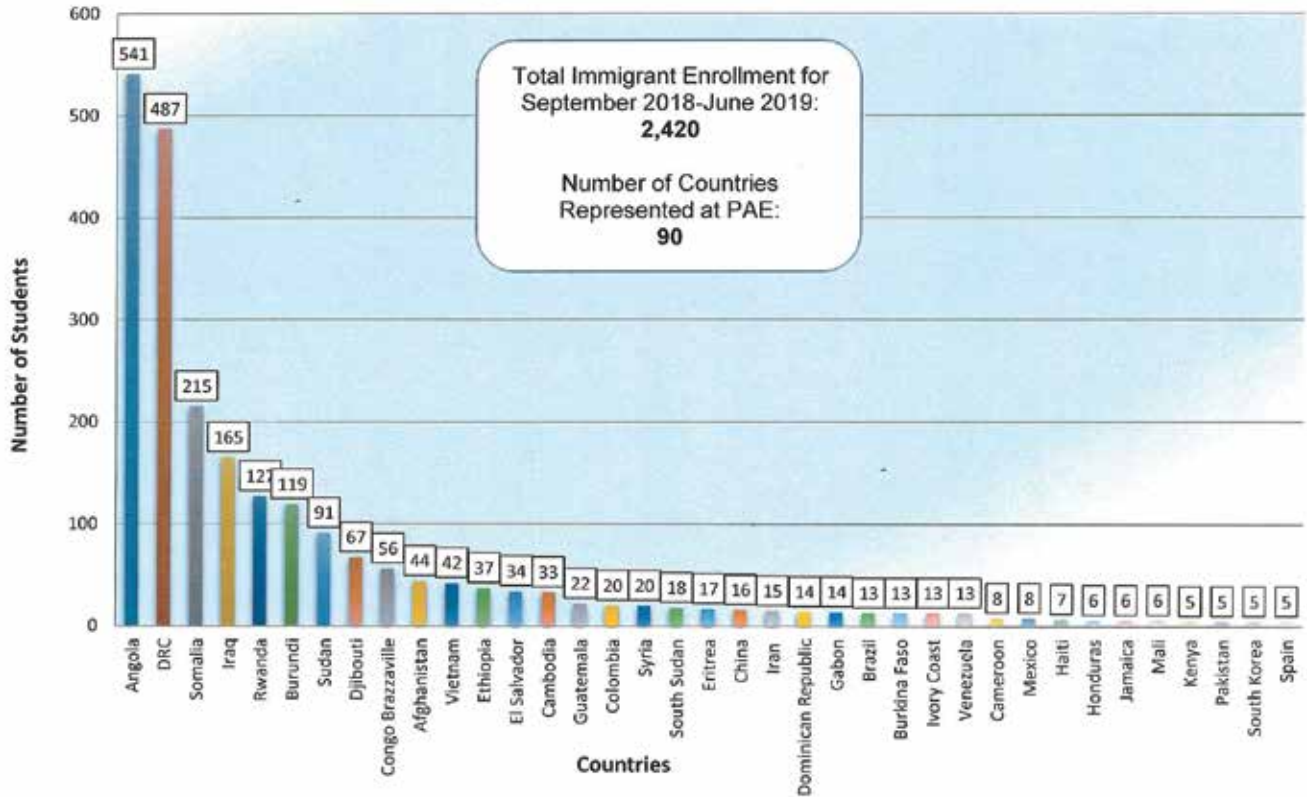
These partners are teachers, a wonderful team of teachers
They are all good listeners, advisers and represents a huge support
They always on time, available, open minded and so happy to help folks to be successful
I have so many good things to say but let me finish here by thanking all Mainers for their kindness, love and compassion towards new immigrants

All my best wishes to Portland Adult School, teachers, tutors and all those partners who donate to help the school support its Program, and your families

May God bless America

Enrollment By The Numbers

Immigrant Enrollment 2018-2019



Countries with 4 or less students attending - Albania, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bosnia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Gambia, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Rep. Of Georgia, Russia, Sao Tome, Senegal, Somali, Sri Lanka, St. Lucia, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tibet, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, and