

Conversation Leaders: (not sure this is the correct designation...Volunteers? Tutors?)

Joyce Donadee

Fr. Regis Smolko

Cliff Schoff

Jon DeMartino

Joyce asked about the flyer Jon made and he said he would send it after class. Marilyn Mulvihill stopped in to say hello and to drop off folders and intake sheets; one for each student's information. These will remain at the church.

Joyce led us off by welcoming everyone and asking each of us to introduce ourselves.

Students:

Young Hye Jeun (yong HAY) – [Korea] Arrived 17 years ago, just after her marriage. She has three children, ages five, eight and 13. Young Hye recently graduated from cosmetology school. She is very excited about the conversation classes and is and happy to be here.

Yoko – [Japan]. Immigrated to U.S. a year-and-a-half ago. She also lived here 10 years ago for three years. She is very happy to be back in Pittsburgh. Yoko has two children; a son, 20, in Japan and a 16-year-old who is here and in 10th grade at North Allegheny.

Hyun-ju (hen-JU)- [Korea] Has lived in the U.S. for two years and eight months. She is married and has two sons, in third and fourth grades at Marshall Elementary.

Jungmi Lee (jung MEE) - Jungmi has been in the U.S. for only two months. She is literate in Korean but all facets of her English are very limited. Her husband speaks English and works in Pittsburgh. She has a four-year old son and a seven-year old daughter who is in first grade. Her son accompanied her to class and played quietly the entire time.

We then divided into pairs and each volunteer went through an intake sheet with one of the students. After the sheets were completed, each pair sat together and discussed topics revealed by the intake questions. The three students who have better English skills said they have problems with idioms and word usage, ex., "overdose" was used without clarification in a news report, to indicate an overdose of illegal drugs, although there are many types of overdosing. They also reported problems communicating with Doctors and other medical personnel. Joyce passed a script around and two of the students read it, taking the parts of patient and medical staff. We discussed unusual or difficult words and phrases used in the script, such as "appointment," "open slot," "pencil you in," etc.

Regis got a flip-board and listed some of the words with which they had difficulty. The word, "practice" in reference to a doctor's office was a problem, even for the students with the best command of English. Regis said he could ask a parishioner, a retired physician, to come to a session and allow the students to role-play, asking questions and explaining symptoms so he can give feedback and offer responses a physician might make. We all thought that was a great idea. We'll probably use a whiteboard or flip board to list some of the common-but-difficult words and phrases.

Another of Joyce's worksheets allowed the students to select patients' complaints as indicated by a series of cartoon drawings. This was easy for the three, more-advanced students and even the student with limited English skills was able to identify several of the terms, such as "headache," stomach ache" and "earache." She wrote the word, "ache" in her notebook as her first vocabulary word. All four students use dictionaries on their smartphones.

The group agreed to begin each class with group conversation, using materials and exercises that will help to guide and encourage discussion. Following the group conversation, we will divide into pairs and work one-on-one as needed to meet each students specific needs.

The session ended with the decision to skip Tuesday May 2 and to meet again on Thursday, May 4, at ten a.m.. The following week we will plan to meet on both Tuesday and Thursday, pending other information about tutors and/or students. Jon will meet with Jungmi on Tuesday, May 9, to provide more one-on-one assistance, regardless of whether there is a conversation class that day.* Hyun-ju will drive her to class and also work with Jon if there is no conversation class that day; otherwise Hyun-ju will join the group. One student has to leave class at 11:30 instead of 12. She will be asked if she wants to come at 9:30 next Thursday, May 4. If so, Cliff agreed to come early and work with her prior to class.

* The schedule is now available. There will be conversation class on Tuesday, May 9.