



REEP Quarterly

What is REEP?

Our Vision:

Our learners will be able to access and use information from a variety of sources, voice their ideas and concerns, act independently and continue learning in an ever-changing world.

Our Mission:

To provide for the education and employment related needs of limited English proficient adults who live and work in Arlington.

Our Goals:

Consistent with their aptitudes, interests and educational needs, Limited English Speakers in Arlington will:

- develop communication and literacy skills needed to function in the workplace, home, and community;
- apply social and civic knowledge and critical thinking skills in order to become an empowered citizenry;
- acquire skills to become independent lifelong learners; and
- gain skills to use technology in their lives and learning.

County Board Vice Chair Christian Dorsey visited REEP in April to talk to students (see Community Links, Page 4)

From the Director: Celebrating Success in Job Training

A year of significant change has come to a close, and as the construction dust settles and we get used to our new office space, it's nice to look back on what we have achieved this year. Of particular note is the success of the new job-related training we began offering to English language learners last September.

A grant from the Virginia Department of Education has allowed REEP to develop Integrated Education and Training courses (IET) that help students earn workforce credentials leading to a job or to advance their career. Over the past year, REEP students have had the opportunity to earn ServSafe® Food Protection Manager certification and Northstar Digital Literacy certificates as they study English. For students with jobs and families, it can be difficult to find time for training courses. When planning this new programming, we were guided by the belief that a model allowing students to engage in job skills training at the same time they are learning English would help break down barriers and provide opportunities that our students were looking for.

Even with our confidence in the model, we couldn't have anticipated the strong student response. Demand for the ServSafe® and Northstar training exceeded capacity and program enrollment was tied to lotteries. Over the course of the year, 87 students par-

ticipated in IET programming.

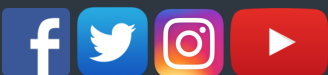
Eleven students earned ServSafe® Food Protection Manager Certification from the National Restaurant Association. Students in the Northstar Digital Literacy program earned 52 certificates in digital literacy skills including, Internet basics, using email, the Microsoft Office suite, social media, and information literacy. All IET students had the opportunity to work one-on-one with a job coach. Job coaches worked with students on a weekly basis, helping them to identify a career pathway and to prepare for their next steps. This included guiding students through the increasingly digital nature of the U.S. job market. Coaches showed students how to find job postings online, apply for jobs on company websites, and describe their skills to potential employers.

Due to the popularity of both programs, we will be offering four cohorts of the ServSafe® program in the coming year. While students will be able to continue earning Northstar module certificates in the regular English classes, our IT/Professional Services career pathway will be developed to include an English and Basic Computer Skills Certification class that will integrate the Northstar Digital Literacy program and expand with training to earn industry-recognized Microsoft Office Specialist certificates.

— Emily Beckett, REEP director



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Statistical Report

Table 1. Goals and Year-To-Date Progress

Progress toward our goals by June 30, 2018	
Annual Goal	Year to date
Provide 3,385 ESL class slots	3,732 slots provided
Provide 820 intensive scholarships	931 slots provided
Intensive ESL class slots	1,916 slots provided
Non-intensive ESL, workplace literacy, family literacy, detention ESL, Specialty classes, and/or Outreach classes	885 slots provided
70% of Intensive, Non-Intensive, and Specialty ESL students complete 12-week session	82% completed
75% of Intensive, Non-Intensive, and Specialty ESL students who complete 12 weeks achieve course competencies	76% attained
55% of all Intensive, Non-Intensive, and Specialty ESL students progress to next level	62% progressed
50% of all Workplace Literacy and Family Literacy enrolled will complete the competencies necessary for their course.	53% attained

REEP operates ESL classes at Syphax Education Center (SEC), Arlington Mill Community Center (AMCC), Wakefield High School (WHS), Arlington County Detention Facility (ACDF), and Gates of Ballston.

4th Quarter Enrollment

During the 4th Quarter, 975 county ESL enrollments were provided, 729 (75%) in intensive classes and 246 (25%) in Non-intensive, Specialty, Workplace, and Outreach classes. Of the 729 intensive enrollments, 67% were tuition slots (491 slots) and 33% were scholarship/voucher slots (238 slots). During FY 17-18, 3,732 county ESL enrollments were provided, 2,847 (76%) in intensive classes and 885 (24%) in non-intensive, specialty, workplace and Outreach ESL classes.

Performance Goals

Enrollment for the English classes in FY 17-18 increased slightly as compared to FY 16-17. REEP students gave a strong endorsement for their classes, with 91% of respondents rating their classes as very good or good in a survey (see page 3). County intensive and non-intensive students completed their courses this quarter at a rate of 82%. REEP completions continue to well exceed the goal of 70% and demonstrate a high level of student satisfaction. Of the students who completed their courses, 76% attained the course competencies needed to move to the next instructional level this quarter. Of all students enrolled (completers and non-completers), 62% attained the course competencies needed to advance to the next instructional level this quarter.

Table 2. Breakdown by English proficiency level

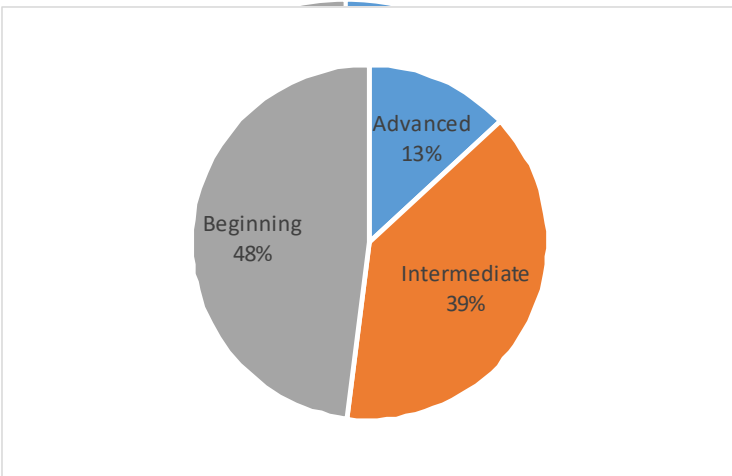


Table 3. Demographic Information

Ethnicity:	71% Hispanic	11% African
	7% Pacific Asian	11% Other
Age:	1% 17-18	12% 19-24
	60% 25-44	17% 45-54
	10% 55 and older	
Gender:	38% Male	62% Female
Educational Background:	14% Less than 7 years of education	
	49% 7-12 years of education	
	37% 13 or more years	
	68% High School Diploma	
Employment Status*:	46% Employed full-time	
	19% Employed part-time	
	65% Employed	

* Employment information is collected from new students upon initial REEP registration and does not reflect changes in employment status during a student's continued enrollment in the program.

Workplace and ESL Contract Classes:

During the 4th Quarter, REEP provided intensive instruction to three students with workplace vouchers. These students were referred by Arlington Public Schools. In addition, the following businesses/agencies sponsored students this quarter: Arlington Employment Center, CT & V, Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, ORS Interactive, Rery Sprinklers LLC, Maravilla Construction and Catholic Charities.

★ SPONSOR A STUDENT ★

Are you interested in sponsoring a REEP student's studies? Companies, organizations or individuals can make tax deductible donations. Contact Natalia Benefiel at natalia.benefiel@apsva.us or call (703) 228-8024

Tech News

Over the past few years, we have worked hard to integrate digital literacy skills into English and life-skills instruction, to help our students navigate the technological realities of daily life. REEP teachers have participated in professional development activities and curriculum revisions, and the program added computer skills certification courses for students.

We were honored to have this work featured in the Spring issue of PROGRESS, a newsletter produced by the Virginia Adult Literacy Resource Center (VALRC) for the Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Network (VAELN). The article discussed REEP's approach to digital literacy instruction in an English language acquisition program for adults.

The article featured extensive interviews with two REEP teachers: Micayla Burrows (digital literacy instructor, ESL instructor, and then IET coordinator) and Darlene Fahrenkrug, digital literacy instructor and ESL instructor, who shared best practices, techniques, tech tool picks, and insights on digital literacy instruction at REEP. The full article is available online at this link:



REEP teacher Darlene Fahrenkrug, helping a student with digital literacy.

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Volunteers play a vital role in all components of the REEP Program— as teachers' aides in the Intensive and Non-intensive Programs, as literacy teachers in the Extended Literacy Program, and as Outreach ESL teachers.

Volunteer Program

The volunteer program closed out the year on a high note, with 21 volunteers receiving awards from the Leadership Center at Volunteer Arlington.

REEP teachers and coordinators nominated outstanding Outreach Center volunteer teachers and teaching assistants for 100 Hours of Service Awards. A handful of the volunteers attended an award ceremony and dinner hosted by Volunteer Arlington.

"Too often the news we hear can break our heart, and it's in these times that we need to be reminded of the power that abounds when we put others in our hearts," said Lisa Fikes, executive director of Volunteer Arlington.

Attendees heard moving speeches from award recipients. Arlington County Board Vice Chair Christian Dorsey emceed the event while Arlington County Board Chair Katie Cristol personally congratulated award winners.

REEP volunteers were asked to stand and thanked for their service to Arlington's adult ESL learners.

Join REEP in saying thank you to our distinguished volunteers who took home awards: Rebecca Carpenter, Carol Chmelynski, Ellen Clore-Patron, Charlotte deButts, Chris Do, Janet Dorn, Carol Duffy Clay, Lisbeth Goldberg, Shobhit Gupta, Elizabeth Hilla, Cathy Jabara, Mariabruna Jennings, Mary Kalfatovic, Karen Middleton, Camilla Nilles, Elizabeth Rathbun, Carol Robinson, Gail Robinson, Diane Schwartz, Helen Staren, and Ann Wroth.

During the 4th Quarter, 84 volunteers served with REEP, with 22 being first-time volunteers. Thirty-three volunteers served as teaching assistants, 28 served as outreach teachers, and 6 as job coaches. Outreach Center teachers provided instruction to about 95 students and the teaching assistants supported 21 classes.

Program Highlight: Survey Shows Learner Satisfaction

REEP's annual Student Satisfaction Survey, conducted during the 4th Quarter, provides a formal measure of how learners view their classes and the program. Results are used to evaluate program effectiveness and to guide decision making. Staff administered the online survey in June to students in the intensive programs at Syphax Education Center and Arlington Mill Community Center. The survey design makes it accessible to learners at all instructional levels.

Of the 482 students who took the survey, 91% felt their class was good or very good, 87% felt good or very good about their progress in English, and 80% felt good or very good about using computers in their classes.

Students indicated a positive impact from classes on their daily lives as they work to integrate into life in the U.S. For example, students wrote:

"My english class is helping to get better communication in my job. And helping my children doing their homework."

"Coming to take class is help me don't use translet (sic) Spanish to English in the school of my kids, and I can ask in English when I go any place can be a restaurant or clinic. This program is help in all my life."

Survey results indicated a majority of REEP's students were satisfied with the learning activities, digital literacy instruction, and materials used in class. In terms of enhancements, learners expressed interest in increasing the number of scholarships available, limiting class size for more effective learning, and increasing offerings for conversation, computer, and higher level English classes.

Staff News

Two REEP coordinators attended the TESOL International Convention held at the end of March in Chicago. The four-day meeting is the most important annual gathering of professionals in the ESL field. Volunteer coordinator Amanda Rayborn and Arlington Mill site coordinator Phil Cackley went to presentations on implementing standards, learned about new resources, and networked with colleagues old and new.

In April, REEP teachers and coordinators gathered for an in-service on the new state-adopted English Language Proficiency standards. With the guidance of Ruth Sysak, program coordinator, staff considered methods of getting learners more comfortable with using academic language, such as responding to text-dependent questions. In addition, we reviewed several newly revised lesson plans that incorporate the ELP standards. All of this is ongoing work!

In May, a number of teachers attended an informal "brown bag" professional development session on how to use QR codes in classroom instruction. Teacher Amante Fajardo showed methods he has used. Given the number of learners who use smartphones, it's an area worth exploring.

Finally, REEP teachers, volunteers and staff gathered for a program picnic in Bluemont Park, where we enjoyed food, drink, conversation and volleyball on a beautiful spring evening.

Editorial staff: Emily Beckett, Phil Cackley. Contributors: Natalia Benefiel, Michele Cona, Paul McCabe, and Amanda Rayborn.

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Blanca, a Chick-fil-A supervisor, talks to Arlington Mill students about job opportunities.

Community Links & Success Stories

Community Links: Students advocate to county board members

REEP students spoke to Arlington County board members, visited museums and libraries and got information from several outside organizations during the 4th Quarter.

Students advocated on behalf of the program during county budget deliberations in a variety of ways in April. Former REEP student Patricia Cabrera Velasquez spoke at a public hearing, appealing to the board not to cut REEP's budget. She said that because of REEP, she was able to make this type of a statement in a public setting.

"Learning English has helped us become active members of the community," Cabrera Velasquez said. "As community members, we pay taxes and participate in the county's various programs."

About 10 advanced students from Syphax attended the April 3 meeting and stood in support of REEP. In addition, students from an intermediate class at Wakefield attended an Open Door Monday meeting April 9 to make similar statements.

Board Vice Chair Christian Dorsey visited REEP on April 19 and visited with 35 students for about an hour. He thanked students who had sent letters to board members, asking that the budget not be cut.

Learners also benefited from visits by outside organizations bringing information – and free food! Arlington Mill students got to interact with employees from Chick-fil-A Crystal City In-line, who gave information about job opportunities and also had free chicken nuggets. Pamela Montesinos, from LaCocinaVA, talked to students at Syphax about culinary training her group offers. And Ken Matthews, from the Dieta Cero-Auto program, gave learners information about transit programs in Arlington.

Finally, a Thomas Shortman Training Fund class visited the National Museum of American History in June, while several classes from Wakefield and Syphax took field trips to the Arlington Public Library.

Staff Success Stories ~

REEP's instructional technology coordinator, **Michele Cona**, knows about more than just computers and websites. An experienced ESL teacher, she has seen almost everything – including childbirth.

"I can remember my first year teaching, one of the students went into labor during class," Michele said. "I rode with her to the hospital. The coordinator said, 'Go!'"

She marked her 10th anniversary as REEP's ITC this year, but spent a number of years as a classroom instructor for the program, as well as two years teaching in the Peace Corps in China.

Since 2008, Michele has focused primarily on supporting teachers and helping them discover new ways of bringing language lessons to ESL students. She is responsible for the program's computer instruction, on-line presence and technology workplace offerings. She also has direct supervision of the Saturday classes for the Thomas Shortman Training Fund. When not busy for REEP, Michele spends time cooking and baking with her two daughters and her husband.

Lillian Quinteros started working at REEP back when the program was located at the old Wilson School, in Rosslyn. She worked part-time in the office after doing a 9-month office skills training course at the Career Center. Now, 25 years later, Lillian is a full-time clerical assistant with primary responsibility for the Arlington Mill site, as well as many other duties.

Lillian came from Bolivia to the U.S. in 1983 to join her husband, who was living here. Together they raised three children and now have six grandchildren. She and her husband are motorcycle enthusiasts, but they also ran a Bolivian *caporales* dance group, Raices de Bolivia, for 20 years. In her years at REEP, Lillian has worked to solve problems for many students from all over the world. "I learned to understand people," she said.

A teacher for more than 10 years in the intensive program, **Angie Greene**, has taught a range of levels from beginning to advanced. A native of Ireland, she moved to the U.S. in the 1990s and worked for a number of years in facilities management. She completed coursework to get a TESL certificate and found she enjoyed the field. A neighbor who was a staff member at REEP told her about the program. Angie also has worked for 4 years as REEP's literacy coordinator.

In her spare time, she enjoys reading and cooking, as well as being involved in her two daughters' schools in Arlington.