

Washington English Center: 25 Years of Empowering Immigrants

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Washington D.C. – [Washington English Center](#) (WEC) is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year as the Washington area's premier nonprofit offering affordable English language classes and job-training for immigrants. Founded in 1993 by Pilar Laugel, WEC started with 200 students, and now serves 1700 students a year from over 90 countries.

Washington English Centerâ€™ helps adult immigrants overcome the primary barrier they face in trying to make a better life for themselves and their families - â€™speaking English. Without it, immigrants are unlikely to find jobs that will enable them to move from busboy to wait staff, or from housecleaning in a hotel to managing the front desk. WEC provides ESL classes,â€™from beginner to advanced, plusâ€™workforce readiness, computer literacy and citizenship preparation programs, six days a week, at night,â€™and on weekends.

“For 25 years, [our mission](#) has been to empower immigrants by offering excellent, reasonably priced ESL training,” said Gabriela Mossi, WEC’s Executive Director. “More recently we have expanded our course offerings to include certification programs in hospitality, food handling, and the office environment. As a result, I am pleased to say that last year 125 participants in our job readiness program found jobs.”

WEC’s unique model relies on a dedicated corps of over 350 volunteer teachers, tutors and job coaches who provided over \$1 million worth of teaching hours last year. “The key to our success is our volunteers,” said Stephanie Lawson, Chair of the Board of Directors, and a volunteer teacher herself. “Without their tireless efforts we would not have been able to serve our students for 25 years.” Ms. Lawson was also pleased to note that the Catalogue for Philanthropy named WEC one of the best nonprofits in the DC region in 2017-2018 and has included WEC in the Catalogue in every review cycle since the early 2000s.

WEC will be celebrating this milestone on May 22 at a cocktail reception at the Mead Center for American Theater, home of Arena Stage, 6:30-8:30 pm that evening. Among the festivities will be testimonials from current students and several founding Board members are expected to attend. The event is being generously sponsored by Kaiser Permanente, Heritage Financial Consultants, Long & Foster | Christie's International Real Estate, Savant Capital Management, TTR | Sotheby's International Realty. To become a sponsor, donate or to purchase tickets, visit: www.WashingtonEnglish.org

Washington English Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. It has operated at 2200 California Street, NW, also home of the Our Lady Queen of the Americas Church, since 1993.

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WHERE :

CONTACT:

Jose A. Fernandez 202-387-2222 operations@washingtonenglish.org