



Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views



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The "Running on Empty" Issue

April 21, 2005

Adult Education Voices Raised

As adult ed. funds from the federal government were threatened in the administration's proposed budget, a national campaign was organized to let our Congress and the media know that the projected dismantling of adult education was not acceptable. Nope. Non. Nyet. Nein, no way, no how. Locally, we asked concerned people to write or call our legislators to express how important we think adult ed. is. Also, many of our teachers and students, organized by Kim Iwasko and Maribel Ramirez, lead a not-so-silent vigil of over 200 at the plaza. That event was covered by local media, and received lots of attention. In an incomplete count, our students and staff sent out over 500 letters and faxes to our congressperson and our two senators. Congratulations to all who worked to give tangible and successful evidence of our concerns. At present, the "Kennedy amendment" has restored current funding to adult ed. But the threat is not over, and we may need similar efforts to voice our concerns about the California funding for education.

April Checklist - Good things to Know

1. Summer schedules and assignments should be out to teachers by May 6. Tentative Fall assignments should be given to teachers by June 10.
2. Kim Iwasko is President-Elect of Steinbeck Chapter of the California Council for Adult Education.
3. Department chair nominations are closed. Ballots will be out to teachers by May 1.
4. Adult education was invited to a meeting with the Cabrillo College ESL department to review how our institutions can work together more closely.
5. Adult ed. was asked to facilitate our Board of Trustees study session on PVUSD Goals. Thanks Nat and Burr.
6. The Learning Center staff is meeting to review how to reconfigure the Learning Center for next year.
7. Plans for a "Student Support Center" continue.
8. Langendorf building is not scheduled to open until summer 2006.
9. **Attendance continues to lag behind last year. We need to everything possible to increase student attendance. Calls, postcards, emails.... contact students to ask them to come back. We are struggling to make out CAP this year, and every hour of attendance is over \$4 for adult ed.**
10. Student Sports Day was a... qualified success. Over 20 staff members had a wonderful time. Unfortunately staff outnumbered students. Ah well, we got to see Paradise and Molly and Frank show on-the-court skills, and your director was told to stop shaking it. A success, no?



Watsonville Newsmaker!

Maribel Ramirez is 19 years old and is from Valle de

Santiago, Guanajuato, Mexico. She came to the United States on May 23, 2001 with her family because her father was here. At first, she took care of her sister because her parents worked, but in the spring of 2003 Maribel's mother told her to decide between going to school or working in the fields. At 17, Maribel felt scared and embarrassed about going to school because she didn't speak English, and she felt "too old" to start high school.

Maribel remembers, *"I decided I didn't want to go to the fields. It was better to go to school. I went to the store and bought one notebook, an eraser, pencils and one pencil sharpener. When I came back to my house I told my mom, 'I don't want to work in the fields; I have decided to go to school.' My mom agreed with me and said, 'I don't want you to work in the fields either. School is more important for you because you are young and you can have a better future.'"*

Maribel started coming to Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education in spring 2003. She started in Beginning Low 1 and continued through Beginning Low 2, and Beginning High. She also attended the ESL Computer classes every afternoon and in the fall of 2004 she transferred to the afternoon VESL Healthcare classes. Upon completing VESL Healthcare she began attending GED classes. Her teachers were Marcia Poms, Amy Jewell, Elizabeth Cunningham and Michael Hillyer. During the course of her studies Maribel has also taken advantage of WAAE's Distance Learning Program by borrowing videos and studying at home. She is now in Intermediate High in the VESL Office Skills class, and her teacher is Kim Iwasko. She says, *"I don't feel embarrassed and scared any more. I feel so happy learning more about computers. In September I will go to Cabrillo College to continue learning more English to have better job opportunities so that I can help my family. The other reason I want to go to college is because in the future I want to be a nurse. I remember when the advisor came into our class and told us about a student named Ramona who became a nurse after working in the fields for many years. I had always wanted to be a nurse and at that point I realized, if she can do it, so can I."*

On Sunday March 13th, Maribel, Director Bob Harper and ESL Student Advisor CathyJo Diaz went to Sacramento, California's Capital, representing Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education. They attended many meetings where over 100 students, teachers, classified staff and administrators talked about the specific legislation affecting adult education. Maribel met the assistant to Senator Abel Maldonado, and Assemblymembers Simón Salinas and John Laird.

"I heard Bob ask for more money for babysitting to help parents go to school. He asked to have the Distance Learning, Video Home Study funding continued. I also learned that it is important for all of us to send e-mails and letters to our representatives in Washington D.C. I know we can do it. We need to have adult schools all over the United States. I liked going to Sacramento because I learned many things that happen in our schools and I like to help the school, the students and the teachers, too. In the future, I want to study to be a nurse but first I need to finish all of my classes at Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education."

On Wednesday, March 23, 2005, Maribel participated in the Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education demonstration that took place at the Watsonville Plaza. It was a peaceful demonstration, with approximately 100 students, faculty members, Pajaro Valley Unified School District board members and community members, marching around the Plaza, displaying posters made in her VESL Office Skills class, asking people to help adult schools.

"We gave flyers to people in their cars because maybe they have family at Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education. President Bush is proposing to cut 66% of the money adult schools receive per year. The adult schools help us reach our dreams. We are writing our representatives in Washington D.C. asking them to stop President Bush's 66% cut in adult school money. I hope they will hear us and pay attention to us. We need their help to preserve adult schools all over the United States. It is because of the adult schools that so many of us are able to take our first steps up the educational ladder of success. President Bush says, 'No child left behind.' What about 'No Adult left behind.' The adults help their children and younger brothers and sisters. They are their role models."



Photo courtesy of the Register-Pajaronian - Adult Ed Vigil



WAAE Spring Calendar

Student Persistence Study Circles:

April 22, 1:15 - 4:15

April 29, 1:15 - 4:15

May 10, 4:15 - 7:15

ESL Leadership Meeting, Tuesday, April 26

Student Art Show Reception, Wednesday, April 27, GV, 10:00-noon

CBET Conference, April 30, Project-based Learning (see Cynthia)

Dept. Chair Ballots Out - May 1

CBET Meeting (paid), Tuesday, May 3, 4:30-6:00, Green Valley

Adult Ed. Presentation to Watsonville City Council
Tuesday, May 9, 6:00, City Hall

WAAE Community Advisory Council, Tuesday, May 11, 10:00-12:00, GV

ESL/CalPro Workshop, "Questioning Strategies",
Friday, May 13, 1:00-4:00

Department Chair Election Finished - Friday, May 13

ESL Home Group - May 20

ESL Awards Ceremonies, May 23

Graduation Ceremonies, June 3

End-of-School All Staff Meeting, Saturday, June 4, 10:00-12:00 (paid)
Porter Building, Room 6

Summer School: June 13 - July 27, 2005
Back-to-School Meeting, August 12
Fall Semester Begins, August 15