

Welcome Back Staff

José Ramón Fernández-Peña
Initiative Director

Nancy Mullenax
Director

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Spring Office Hours

(Beginning the week of
January 15, 2006)

Monday—CLOSED

Tuesday

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. & 2 to 5 p.m.

Wednesday

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. & 2 to 7 p.m.

Thursday

9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. & 2 to 4
p.m., 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Friday

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. & 2 to 5 p.m.

Saturday

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**To make an appointment
with the Educational Case
Manager or to confirm
class or workshop registra-
tion, please contact
(415) 561-1833**

City College of San Francisco
John Adams Campus
1860 Hayes Street, Room 221
San Francisco, CA 94117

<http://www.e-welcomeback.org/>



Issue 15

Fall 2005

WELCOME BACK CENTER

Letter from the Director

The last months have been an exciting time for the San Francisco Welcome Back Center as the efforts of so many have brought about tremendous accomplishments. The most gratifying and exciting accomplishments are those resulting from the commitment and hard work of our participants who, despite all of life's responsibilities and demands, are moving towards successfully meeting their goals—whether improving their English, attending classes, or passing licensure exams! Congratulations to all of you for your hard work. It is such a pleasure for us at the Center to work with you.

Another accomplishment this semester has been the

completion of the year long English Health Train pilot course and its successful implementation into the City College of San Francisco ESL department. This means that internationally trained health professionals will have ongoing access to this course in the years to come. Special thanks are in order to the English Health Train curriculum development team, the instructors, especially the participants who worked so hard in the pilot phase! In addition, the Center, in partnership with the RN Department at City College of San Francisco, have been able to begin two NCLEX review courses—one designed for first time test takers and a

second for repeat test takers. These courses will also be offered on an ongoing basis.

The Center has also begun to do intensive analysis of the data we have collected over the last 5 years so that we can continue to improve our services and support to international trained health professionals. We very much welcome your views and perspectives so please feel free to share these with us.

Our best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a wonderful year to come!

Nancy Mullenax
WB Director

Overcoming Obstacles: Success Stories

My favorite part of my job at Welcome Back is hearing the stories you bring me about your success. Through your stories, I learn about the interviews that you had, the good jobs that you got, the exams that you passed, the licenses you received, and the satisfaction you feel. As I mark the end of my third year as a counselor at Welcome Back, I thought I would

share some of my favorite comments, messages, and emails.

A nurse from China told me: "I was working as a Nurse Assistant at Kaiser in San Francisco, I was in a patient's room while a nurse and doctor were attending her. They both tried to draw her blood many times, with no success. The patient was getting upset. I took my cour-

age in my hand, and I said, I am a nurse and I have phlebotomist license. They looked at me, kind of doubtful, like, you? Ok. You try. For me, no problem. I get the vein right away! First try."

A doctor from Russia emailed me from Oregon, after her residency interview: "My first interview is over. The experience

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End of year report

It is hard to believe that another year has gone by. Once again, I would like to share with you where we are with the Welcome Back Initiative at the end of our fourth year and also tell you about our plans for the future.

As of November, the three centers (San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego) combined have seen a total of 5696 participants from 299 countries. The distribution by professions remains constant with physicians and nurses making up 42% of our participants. What has changed is the number of success stories. As of November, a total

of 898 participants have re-entered the health field, these are participants who were not working in the field of health prior to coming to a Welcome Back Center. In addition, 252 have enrolled in new programs that will lead them into jobs in the health field. These include nursing programs, dental hygiene programs, masters in public health programs, biotechnology programs, etc. Also, 62 participants have entered residency training programs.

On the policy arena, we continue to work on expanding opportunities for internationally trained health profes-

sionals. For example, we are working closely with the California Primary Care Association and the Oral Health Access Council exploring the option of developing an advanced-standing dental hygiene program for our internationally trained dentists. The process is slow but some progress is being made, we will keep you posted of any future developments on this realm.

The WB program continues to generate interest not only in California but around the country. We have been working with a series of groups

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"...we continue to work on expanding opportunities for internationally trained health professionals."

(Cont.) Overcoming Obstacles: Success Stories

was great. The program I went to, in Oregon, Family Practice in Cascade Falls, is a good program, they treated us very well, starting with arranging hotel room and hosting us as best friends. I think I did very well, especially after practicing all possible questions with you. No surprises."

From a Peruvian microbiologist, "Hi Naomi! Guess what? I got the good job in the professional laboratory. I got the job by going to the University, trying to find connections with other professionals in the field that I work. Guess what? It worked!"

From a Pharmacist from the Philippines, "I love working at Walgreen's. My work is so tiring, but I'm enjoying it.

My rating after 1 week is good. I am a fast learner with all the training modules. Working inside the pharmacy really reminds me of my pharmacy in the Philippines so I feel like I'm in my place. AND they will sponsor me for the state licensing Exams for Pharmacist! "

A nurse from Russia, 62 years old, when she took the Nursing Exam, called me and left this message, "Naomi, please I need your help. I am not sure I understand correctly this letter I receive. Tell me please, what means: YOU HAVE PASSED the exam. Not possible I passed the exam?" (But of course, it was possible and she DID pass the exam! And she got a job as a nurse with disabled children!!)

A biologist from Mexico told me, after attending our wonderful English Health Train Course, "For so long in this country I felt like I was in a dark forest, and did not understand my pathway here. Now, in this wonderful class, I feel like I have come out into the light of day."

Everyone finds their own way in their own time. Some people learn English faster than others. Some people find jobs in the health care field easier than others. Some people pass licensing exams with less struggles than others.

I am here to help you find your way in your own time. Happy New Year to all!

*Naomi Marcus,
WB Educ. Case Manager*

English Health Train to become CCSF Credit Courses

English Health Train is a one-year accelerated program developed for the Welcome Back Center to directly meet the English language needs of foreign-trained health professionals in the U.S. The program consists of three courses at an intermediate level that aim to improve the communication and professional skills needed to succeed in different health care fields and settings. The courses build on one another and focus on a wide variety of relevant topics and current issues such as *Patients with Special Needs, Electronic Communication with Co-Workers, Cultural Diversity*

in Health Care, and Professional Development, to name just a few.

The custom-designed course materials for English Health Train have been completed and evaluated through a one-year pilot project held January-December 2005. The results of the pilot phase show that the courses are extremely effective, beyond our expectations, in helping foreign-trained health professionals improve their communication skills and achieve their professional goals. In order to make these courses available to a wider audience, Welcome Back recently pro-

posed that City College of San Francisco adopt them as regular credit courses in their ESL department. The first course has already been approved and will be offered in the upcoming Spring term at CCSF, starting January 2006. Plans are underway to also make the other two courses a permanent part of the CCSF curriculum. For anyone interested in enrolling in Course A in the series, called ESL 20, please contact the Welcome Back Center for information about testing and registration.

Helena Simas
Team Leader –EHT Project



NEW ESL CREDIT COURSE AT CCSF – JAN. 2006
(PENDING STATE APPROVAL)

ESL 20 - HEALTH PROFESSIONALS: COMMUNICATION & CAREERS A

A unique new course that improves your communication and career development skills in health care through intensive oral practice, group problem-solving, discussions on current health care issues, and special projects related to your own field.

credit placement testing required: level 130
HEALTH CARE BACKGROUND ADVISED

Class time: Thursdays 6:30pm - 9:30pm & Saturdays 9:30AM -12:30PM

For more Information Contact: the San Francisco Welcome Back Center, (415) 561-1833

“The first (English Health Train) course has already been approved and will be offered in the upcoming Spring term at CCSF...”

(Cont.) End of Year Report

around the country who have expressed their interest in replicating the model in their states. Our first success in this effort was the opening of the Boston Welcome Back Center last October.

For the next year, we envision more positive outcomes as many of you will be finish-

ing the courses you have been taking and will re-enter the health workforce. At the same time, we continue to see new participants every week. We will be striving to develop stronger partnerships across the Bay area in order to seek additional funding and to achieve the goal of institutionalizing our ser-

vices.

In closing, I want to thank you for your support and to wish you all a very happy and healthy holiday season.

José Ramón Fernández-Peña,
MD, MPA,
WB Initiative Director



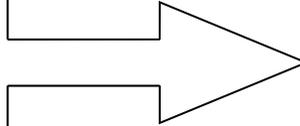
The San Francisco Welcome Back Center is sponsored by City College of San Francisco and San Francisco State University through the Community Health Works of San Francisco, a joint program of the two institutions.

Mission Statement

“To build a bridge between the pool of internationally trained health workers living in California and the need for linguistically and culturally competent health services in underserved communities.”



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We're also on the web at
www.e-welcomeback.org

The San Francisco Welcome Back Center was highlighted in The California Endowment's Annual Report
Read the full story at: http://www.calendow.org/annual_report_05/welcome.stm



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