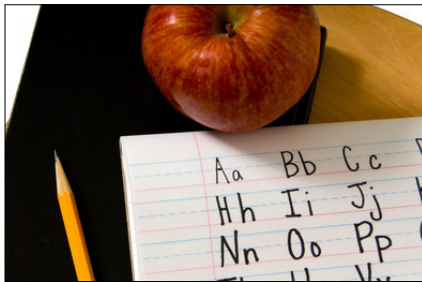




## Curriculum Corner

IRWP has a mission: "To increase the independence and reduce the isolation of immigrant and refugee women by teaching them basic English and practical living skills in the security of their own homes." You might have heard this mission statement before, but what is the bigger story behind these words? There are many successes made by students and teachers in each and every class session. Due to their incredibly diverse backgrounds, each student starts at the level that is right for her and progresses at her own pace. Since levels can include up to 23 lessons and contain multiple objectives, each individual level may take up to one year to finish. Below is a road map through the IRWP program.



### Introductory Curriculum Level

Students in the introductory level of the program are learning basic literacy skills, some for the first time in any language. They begin to lay a foundation through learning their ABC's and recognizing the sounds each letter makes. They then gain the ability to sound out and read words. Basic vocabulary and an introduction to sentence structure start our students on the path to English literacy. Along the way they will learn essential skills, such as memorizing personal information for emergencies, knowing basic numbers, learning to tell time, recognizing area buildings and street signs, and understanding warning labels.

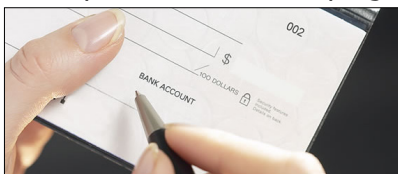
### Level 1

As our students continue on their journey, they build upon numbers, vocabulary, and phonics. Now they receive an introduction to basic grammar and the joys of story reading. Communication and speaking are enhanced, and involvement in the community is increased. Lessons on life skills focus on practicalities such as understanding money, shopping, and cost comparison. They are able to use basic public resources and transportation. Other benefits include the ability to communicate with landlords and their children's teachers, as well as reading stories to their children. Students are able to obtain basic employment and address health issues.



### Level 2

At this point in a student's progress, more advanced reading skills are turning into a reality! Students are becoming more proficient in grammar, comprehension, and other aspects of literacy. They are capable of tackling more advanced goals, such as studying for citizenship or their driver's license, learning cursive, helping their children with homework, emailing, maintaining family health, and understanding banking. They also increase their job-specific vocabulary for success in the workplace.



### Levels 3 & 4

As students progress to these higher levels of accomplishment, literacy and challenging life skills are being undertaken through sophisticated grammar, comprehension, composition, and speaking. Here students are building skills for better jobs, further increasing their involvement in their children's education, fine-tuning financial budgeting skills, and having independent communication with physicians and others in the community.

### Above and Beyond...

For more advanced students, curriculum brings in need-specific or advanced materials dealing with complex grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and conversational skills. Students at this level are able to read and write with deepened proficiency and are accomplishing self-sufficiency in all aspects of their lives. Common goals at this stage include studying for the GED or continued education, computer literacy, improving job skills, and handling family and personal needs with independence and confidence.



No matter where our students might be in their own mission to learn the English language and successfully accomplish their goals, they work hard with their volunteer educators to use these educational tools to capture all the opportunities available to them in their new lives in their new country.

Your donation today helps women reach new levels of success tomorrow.

### Our mission is

to increase the independence and reduce the isolation of immigrant and refugee women by teaching them basic English and practical living skills in the security of their own homes.

## From the Director

As IRWP closes another fiscal year, we celebrate the successes of our volunteers and students. Volunteers worked with their students over 4,500 hours this year, and seven more students are now United States citizens. Students continue to meet many of their goals and develop new dreams along the way. One student, who is in the beginning stages of literacy, aspires to read and write so that she can "be something" like the woman she saw on Oprah. Like our student, she had little education in her home country in Africa but later went on to go to school in the United States and became a doctor. Other accomplishments also went beyond the pages of the books to all other aspects of life, from one student feeling that she is "part of the excitement" in her daughter's wedding planning due to her growing English skills, to another being safer after learning what her family should do in the case of a tornado. Every year we are continually amazed by all of the new landmarks made by our hard-working students. They are an inspiration!

As volunteers and students transition in or out of our program, the same must happen with our Board of Directors. Due to completing two term limits, board members Karen Heitzman, Cynthia Biehle, and Sister Carleen Reck, SSND stepped off the IRWP board in June 2011. We are grateful for their time, energy, and passion in helping us grow from serving 49 annually in 2006 to serving 128 students in 2011. At the same time, we are excited to welcome Sister Deanne Stratmann to our board. Sister Deanne has been a great friend to IRWP throughout the years and we look forward to her working to continue our growth and outreach in the community. If you are interested in joining our board, please contact me.

In the coming months be sure to check out exciting videos of our volunteers and students talking about their experiences in the program on our website at [www.irwp.net](http://www.irwp.net). We are also on facebook--visit our page for the latest news, updates, and anecdotes.

Pat Joshu - Executive Director



## Board of Directors

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## Famous Quote

"Teaching is the greatest act of optimism."

- Colleen Wilcox

## Family Reading

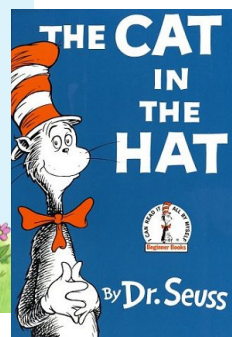
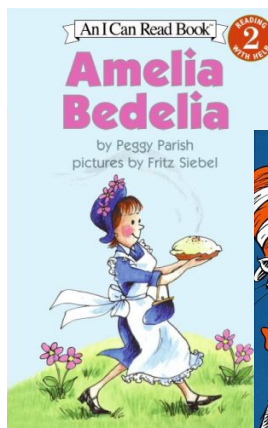
This year, IRWP received a grant from the organization First Book, whose mission is to provide access to new books for children in need. With the money given in the grant, IRWP was able to order nearly 300 new, high-quality books at discounted rates to distribute to the children of our students. Titles included new and old favorites, such as 'The Cat in the Hat' and 'Amelia Bedelia.' Students were able to read these books with their children, and teachers integrated story reading into lessons. The children also enjoyed the books. One student's daughters liked theirs so much that they took them to school every day in their backpacks so they would never be without them! Said one IRWP teacher, "Their children are learning more quickly and this helps to keep the parent and child connected in learning English...I love watching my student share the joy of reading with her child." These books have been a fun and easy way for students to be involved in their children's reading, which is one of their most common goals. It also helps in IRWP's goal of benefiting the students' families as a whole through education.

Volunteers enjoyed delivering their books and provided feedback on many of the titles. Here are just a few:

On 'Hop on Pop' by Dr. Seuss: "The Mom (student) is enjoying reading to the 2-1/2 year-old boy--and learning to read with emotion! I love Dr. Seuss books to teach reading with laughter, and watching my student share the joy of reading with her child."

On 'Helen Keller: The World in her Heart' by Cline-Ransome & Ransome: "Given to 8 year-old twins... they love to read...after reading it with them we talked about people who are different. Stories about real people facing difficulties resonate with the parents."

On 'Little Einsteins Learning Library': "Enjoyed by all the children in the family, and easy for moms to begin learning how to read to their children. In my student's culture reading is not a priority and as an oral culture this is a skill they are learning to enjoy."



# Across the World, Teachers become Students

In October 2010, two special young ladies volunteered to spend their fall semester teaching in our program. Annie Pinnell and Allegra Skurka are friends who were studying Arabic language at Washington University. Looking to connect culturally with women from Arabic-speaking countries and to build cross-lingual understanding by teaching English, they volunteered with IRWP. Each ended up working with women from Iraq before going abroad--Annie to Jordan, and Allegra to Egypt.



*Allegra and Annie*

Allegra spent only one month in Cairo, which turned out to be one of the most important in Egypt's recent history. She bore witness to the beginnings of a revolution before having to evacuate from the country at the end of January to Amman, Jordan, where Annie was already living. During their semester abroad both ladies took a turn in becoming accustomed to life within new cultures. In an email to IRWP, Allegra reflected upon how her experience in the Middle East has paralleled that of her student in the program, Vivian, and her life in the United States: "Now that I'm basically experiencing what she has to deal with every day--living in a new country, everyone speaking a different language, and me barely knowing enough to get by and having no real method of transportation--I appreciate even more everything she and her family have gone through and how amazing she is for always being so cheery." Annie's thoughts were very similar, saying, "I feel like I'm experiencing at least a little taste of what it's like for them. Namely, just what it feels like to be a foreigner! It really has given me even more respect for them and the challenges they face."



*Amman, Jordan*

In her blog about her travels, Allegra also observed the work that it takes to learn "real life" Arabic and how the many small differences between languages can make a big impact when trying to communicate with others. She points out that conversing and interacting with native speakers, in addition to studying technical matters, is key in what she calls "the fluency quest." While teaching for IRWP, these ladies gave their Arabic-speaking students the chance to take this quest, and now have started the journey themselves. Both Annie and Allegra have returned to the United States this spring, and are continuing in their studies, their work with immigrants and refugees, and their efforts to both educate and become educated in the English and Arabic languages.

## Thank you to all our wonderful supporters who made it possible to open new doors through English education for 128 students in the last year!

Special thank you to the foundations for their wonderful support.

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Thank you to everyone that attended events, purchased raffle tickets, and donated to our silent auctions.

# Immigrant & Refugee Women's Program



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www.irwp.net

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## Spotlight on Student Success

IRWP volunteers enjoy sharing stories about their students:

"S. has turned a little corner. People are beginning to tell her she speaks English well. Of course that gives her some confidence, which was the roadblock for a while. We are working on a little technique to help--when she senses someone is not understanding her she tries a different word--sounds simple, but it has really helped her. I keep telling her it's all about communicating, not being perfect, and I think she is beginning to sense that. When we come to a word she does not know in her workbook, often she will write a little definition in Russian next to it...TODAY, she wrote the definition in ENGLISH...WOW...a GIANT step."

On conversation with her student: "I feel it is such good practice for her. I correct her pronunciation, ask for clarification if I don't understand, and let her talk. She often is unaware of the passage of time, so yesterday when her cuckoo clock rang 2 chimes (one hour was up), she had just finished saying how she understands English, but nobody understands her, and I said, "For one hour you have conversed," then I pointed to the clock. She gasped and laughed and said how no one else talks with her in English and the only time she gets to practice is with me."

**Volunteer to teach today - one hour, twice a week.  
Lesson plans, training, and materials are waiting for you!**

## Save the Date

**Festival of Nations, August 27 & 28, 2011**

**Visit us in Tower Grove Park on Saturday and Sunday**

**Trivia Night, Saturday, September 24, 2011**

**St. Catherine Laboure, 9740 Sappington Road**

**Hoolie, Sunday, March 11, 2012**

**Maggie O'Brien's Restaurant, 2000 Market Street**

## Trivia Night is Now in September!

Reserve your table before September 4 to receive an Early Bird discount of only \$15 per person.

Your business or group can be a Trivia Sponsor!  
Sponsorships start at \$100 for Silver Level.

Donate a basket or gift certificate for our silent auction.

Your support can help us attain our goal of \$12,000 so our students can reach new levels of success!  
Call 314-771-1104 for more information.

Visit our website at [www.irwp.net](http://www.irwp.net) to learn more.