NAAM Monthly Updates – November 2020

Our office at 330 Lynnway might be physically closed, but NAAM is very much still open. We have been working diligently from home to ensure that our refugee and immigrant clients continue to receive the services they need and deserve. Here are some things we have been up to this month:

Announcements:
- Happy to share great news: NAAM has been selected by Health Resources in Action for a Massachusetts COVID-19 Community Grant award. The grant will allow NAAM staff to conduct a comprehensive multilingual educational program to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Natasha Soolkin continues participating in the Lynn Food Security Task Force. The goal of the taskforce is to centralize the ongoing work throughout the city and identify existing gaps to better address food insecurity during pandemic.
- We continue delivering food to our clients and students. We now deliver food to 60+ families weekly. Our volunteers are doing an extraordinary job to purchase, pack and deliver food! We see that the need for food resources is growing significantly in the local community. If you or anyone you know would like to contribute in anyway, please go the following link and see how you can help us!
- On Monday the 23rd, the city of Lynn conducted their second TeleTown Hall Meeting. The recording of the meeting is available on Lynn’s website in English and Spanish
- If you are looking for local resources for medical care, housing, immigration assistance, food, etc please check out this Google Doc.

NAAM in the News:
- Natasha Soolkin was featured in the Lynn Daily Item article about services offered by the New American Center
- William Pena, Immigration Specialist, presented about the changes in the citizenship exam for a tele presentation conducted by Telemundo, channel 60

Census:
At the end of October we wrapped up our Census outreach project and happy to report that even despite the challenges of this work during COVID-19 Pandemic our Census Team was able to reach about 2,000 people to educate them about the importance of Census and encourage participation. We also assisted many of our clients to enter their information to Census utilizing technology and interpreting services.

Case Management & Employment:
Over the course of the past month, we have continued to assist clients to update their resumes and to apply to new positions in the industries that are advertising their openings. Many clients have passed the learners permit test and are in the process of taking driving lessons. Several clients who have had their licenses for some time have started working as delivery drivers, for the large online delivery companies as well as for the food and meal delivery companies that have so much increased business now due to the pandemic.
Citizenship:
- Citizenship classes began again in November. We have enrolled 28 students from Cuba, Dominican Republic, Congo, El Salvador, Haiti, and Egypt.
- There are changes to the citizenship interview! Applications received on or after December 1, 2020 will have the updated version of the civics test at the naturalization interview.
  - If your application was received before December 1, you will take the old version of the civics test.
  - The new test has 128 questions. You must answer 12 out of 20 questions correctly to pass.
- If you are interested in classes to help to study for the civics exam, please, call Will at 781-593-0100 x 14.
- If you need help with the citizenship application, please, call Alla at 617-538-6851.
- All our citizenship services are free of charge.

Financial Literacy:
Starting on Friday, November 13th, and continuing for the first three weeks of December, we are offering the Financial Literacy for Newcomers course sponsored by the Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants. We currently have thirty clients and students enrolled in the four-week virtual course that explains budgeting, the basics of banking, credit score and credit report and buying a home. This course is offered three times per year, and past attendees consistently report that the course provides them with much valuable and practical information. Participants who complete all workshops, evaluations will be eligible to receive a one-time incentive of $50.

CRES English Classes:
Dan’s class is focusing on sentence structure, reading, and conversation.

Gina’s class:
“November began as October ended – studying the presidential election results and finally being able to celebrate the results. Then, with one of the biggest American holidays in sight, we turned our language learning to food and cooking – count/noncount nouns, measurements, food preparation and cooking utensils and verbs, describing process and giving instructions. The photos below are meals prepared and shared via photos by students in the class. We also watched videos about the history and current observance of Thanksgiving and how cranberries are grown and harvested.”

Khara’s class:
“The students learnt English through VOA lessons. They learnt comprehension and grammar skills from the video. We also talked about food and Thanksgiving. Also discussed how to keep ourselves safe from COVID during thanksgiving celebration.”
LPS English Classes:

Dulany’s class:
“This month was a short one for us, with the two holidays taking 1/4 of our month’s class time. Aside from the election and covid, our focus this month was the past tense. One of the things we did involved using two devices: a computer or tablet for zoom and a phone for co-editing a shared document in the shared window. Aside from the challenge of the grammar, it was exciting to be able to use technology to work cooperatively online. And of course there was talk about Thanksgiving. There was the civics piece for the members of the class who are waiting for a citizenship interview. There was some math, on behalf of those for those who were planning to cook a turkey - defrosting times, cooking times, and timing the meal. And then after the holiday, we geared up for small-talk outside of class. What better conversation opener than ‘How was your Thanksgiving?’”

Bobby’s class:
“Nothing major to report from my LPS parents class. I added a new student two weeks ago off the waitlist, Darlene. We have been reviewing job interview questions and etiquette, since some of the students have citizenship interviews coming up soon.”

Suzie’s class:
“My update doesn’t have to do with the English instruction part of my class, but with the human, community part. One of my students and her family have been having multiple health issues, and several of her classmates have rallied to help with food, shopping, etc. I am so proud of all of these women.”

ELT-I:
Music class:
A very popular song in November was *I Can See Clearly Now* by Johnny Nash, an American musician from Houston. We read together about his life and what inspired him to write the song. We discussed the lyrics and how the clearing rain and the rainbow are used as symbols for moving through life’s challenges. We watched videos of Johnny Nash and Jimmy Cliff performing the songs with the lyrics scrolling and it was very uplifting for everyone.

Art class:
“We have been focused on learning about the seasonal changes in New England as fall turns to winter. Many of the students were unfamiliar with fall and winter as we experience it here, so, in Art, this was a nice opportunity to look at famous paintings of New England in the fall and winter. The students discussed the settings, landscape elements, time of day, quantities and colors in a number of paintings. We also looked at the people in the paintings and made observations about gender, clothing, spatial relationships and actions. We looked at a map of New England so that the students could learn about the six states and where Massachusetts is in relationship to the other states.”
Wellness class:
“We are always reminded that “wellness” means “well-being” or “being well” and that wellness has many aspects such as physical, social, emotional, spiritual and financial. When we check in on all of these things regularly, we can be in better health and balance in our lives. During the month of November, we have been focused on building confidence with developing a healthy diet and how to identify and seek out healthy foods in the market. This has given us an opportunity to practice with identifying the names and colors of fruits and vegetables, the beginning letters of words and how to write lists in a sentence. We have also started spending some time learning about simple things we can all do to prepare for the upcoming winter season in Massachusetts, especially during the pandemic and flu season.”

Phone Technology class: This month students reviewed how to use Zoom, explored different internet browsers, and tested out different translation apps.

Youth Mentoring Program:
We have had success engaging some of our after-school program youth in being mentored. Many of our youth are currently struggling with school and are in continuous need of emotional support as they navigate the shifts and changes of our Covid-19 climate. As a result, we are expecting more youth to be engaged in this mentorship opportunity soon.

Youth Afterschool Program:
We continue to have our afterschool program on Zoom every weekday from 3:00-5:00. Some November highlights included:

- Students learned made abstract art, learned how to draw leaves and trees, and attempted origami.
- We did some hands-on science activities, including making volcanoes. The activity normally uses baking soda and vinegar, but students also experimented with baking powder, different types of vinegar, and soda.
- We watched several movies, including Home Alone, Frozen 2, and Dora and the Lost City of Gold.
- In light of Thanksgiving, we took some time to reflect on what we are thankful for this year. Some common responses included: family, food, school, and NAC.

Another thing that we are thankful for this year is that NAC Youth Program recently received a $20,000 grant from the Essex County COVID Fund, which will support costs associated with staffing as we work to serve youth in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

Contact Us:
Phone – 781.593.0100 x 18
Email – info@naamass.org
Social Media – Facebook and Instagram

We hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy in these difficult times. We look forward to the day that we can once again greet you all in person at the New American Center.