

Thanksgiving for Christmas

In our American calendar, Thanksgiving and Christmas often feel squashed together. The prophetess Anna also combined Thanksgiving and Christmas. After the birth of Jesus: *Anna ...gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.*

The widows we serve share this joyous outlook. These elderly ladies are constantly giving thanks and regularly telling others about the Good News of Jesus. Students that visit our widows almost always report that these seniors are so thankful and mindful about Jesus' salvation. In the midst of homes that may be falling down, plumbing that is failing, and neighborhoods that are surrounded by shootings...these women boldly proclaim, like the widow Anna 2,000 years before them, "Give thanks for Christmas!"

By Andrew Stern



The challenges of teaching English to refugees



Making pancakes (above) and taking a trip to the Science Center (left) are practical ways of helping Congolese students learn English.

By Marissa Irakoze

One of the many hats I wear with Workday is English as a second language teacher. This sounds good in writing, but it proves to be much more complicated in reality.

First, each student's English skill is at a different level. Some students can write English fairly well, but others can't even read or write in their native language. Another issue that often comes up is that it's hard to learn a language in the classroom and then figure out how to "translate" it into the real world.

A volunteer group recently took our class to the science center, and then to a local restaurant. Each student was paired with a guide. Together they went through the science center, and tried to pick up some new vocabulary words. Next they went to lunch and attempted to order their own meal. Our students had a great time!

In one of the following classes, we had a "cooking" English lesson. Students were given a lot of different ingredients (flour, sugar, eggs, milk, etc.) and measuring cups. I then read off a recipe and the English learners had to follow the instructions to make something they had never made before- pancakes!

I have been trying to incorporate techniques into my class that helped me progress when I was learning a foreign language. The three main ideas are:

1. **Context**- Every night, I was going through markets and shopping centers, repeating small words and phrases, even being forced to order my own food in a different language.
2. **Relationships**- being surrounded by people who spoke that language, I wanted so badly to become closer friends and be able to speak their language to communicate with them.
3. **Laughter**- Learning a language can be so funny! It's important to relax, and learn to laugh at the mistakes you will inevitably make.

I personally dislike English because its rules and exceptions make the language frustrating (especially when I need to explain why "cough" and "through" don't rhyme), but these students make teaching fun! They are always laughing, and motivating themselves to learn. We have a really good group of students right now. I'm so thankful for this opportunity!

JOY Group jaunts help ease isolation among seniors



JOY Group seniors and friends visit an apple orchard (above) and enjoy a movie (below).





The Lord will make a way!

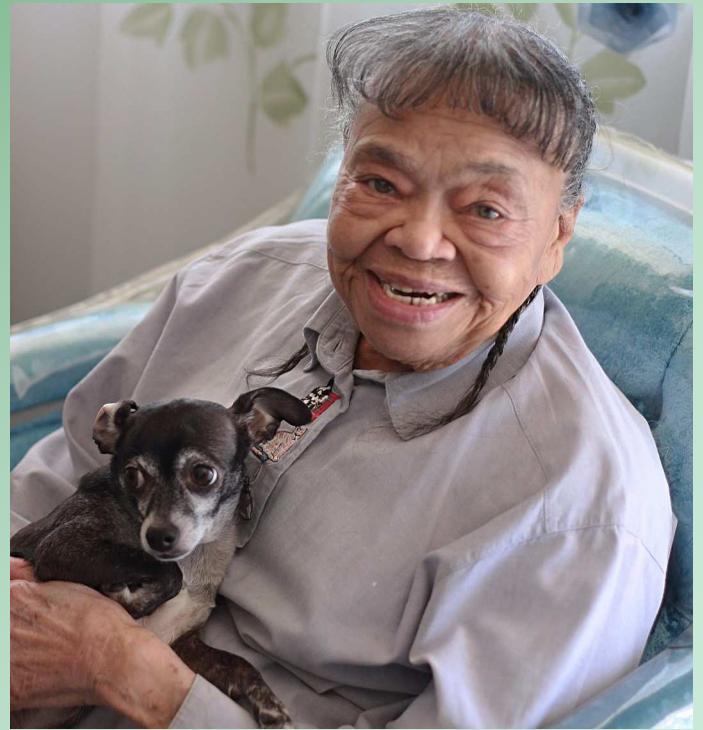
By Andrew Stern, Director, Workday

At one point in his earthly ministry Jesus sent his disciples out to preach and heal, but instructed them to “Take nothing for the journey--no staff, no bag, no bread, no money.” What?! That’s not what Mama says! According to Mom’s wisdom, you always take extra clothes and cash in case the car breaks down or you run into trouble.

Jesus also makes bold and seemingly reckless commands to us: Give up all you have. Sell what you have and give to the poor. “Jesus,” we reply, “don’t you know we need to have a sustainable system to help the poor?”

At Workday, we regularly send volunteers into difficult and impossible situations and God makes a way! Recently, we sent three workers to fix a widow’s plumbing problem. When they arrived, the woman, who was diabetic and low on sugar, would not let the men into her house! When they finally got in, the volunteers made no headway on the plumbing. However, the workers provided breakfast for the widow, which helped to improve her state of mind. They prayed with her for God to lift her spirits. They sang to her, restoring her soul. In the end, the widow prayed for the men, leaving them more blessed than when they arrived! Still the plumbing was not fixed...but that’s not the end of the story.

A short time later, the Lord provided a plumber. Now, the widow has a working, non-leaking kitchen sink! The men who were sent out to fix the plumbing were (at the Workday’s own leading!) unprepared for the job. Who would have to show up? Who would need to ultimately get the glory for fixing the plumbing when there was no plumber and no money? God made a way when there was no way. And, by God’s grace, that is now what Mama says: “The Lord will make a way.”



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