

Working together to achieve one goal

By: Martine A. Thomas, Program Manager



English learner Nataly Kirik gives her volunteer English tutor credit for helping her land a job as an assistant teacher.

“While trying to find a job in a preschool, my tutor encouraged me in different ways,” shares Nataly. “She brought readings on preschool learning, and she wrote questions that I could ask during interviews.”

Betty Taylor, a ten-year veteran volunteer for English At Large, tells a different story from her learner. “It was Nataly who paved the way,” she acknowledges. “She contacted all the preschools in the area, she wrote her own resume, and came up with her own questions for interviews. I just followed what she asked me to do in our tutoring session.”

Five years ago, Nataly, who now lives in Arlington, said goodbye to her third grade class, and moved to United States with her husband and five-year-old son from Russia. The mother of two children hoped to continue her teaching career in Massachusetts, but she had one obstacle to conquer.

“I had to learn good English,” says Nataly, who has taught elementary students for 13 years. “If I wanted to get a good job in a school, I had to learn English.”

Nataly was not able to start learning right away. First, she had to work, and the jobs she found were not rewarding. Then she decided to stay home to raise her newborn daughter. When her daughter was ready for preschool, Nataly was ready to focus on learning English. She contacted English At Large, and she was matched with Betty, her volunteer English tutor. They met at a local library, and Nataly’s goal of working as a teacher received their full attention.

As weeks progressed into months, they researched different preschools where Nataly might work, became familiar with teaching requirements, revamped Nataly’s resume, and wrote and practiced phone inquires and dialogues for interviews.

With Nataly’s perseverance, and Betty’s dedication, Nataly was hired as assistant teacher for Arlington Heights Nursery last summer. Nataly was thrilled to take the familiar role of a teacher, this time using her new English skills to help local children learn.

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Betty says that working with Natalie is a joy. “She is always prepared, conscientious in every detail, asks questions, challenges ideas, is open to new ideas and information, demonstrates integrity, pursues and meets new and difficult goals.”

Receiving her teaching certification is the next item on Nataly’s list. With Betty at her side, she has no doubt that her goal will be attained.

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