

District Attorney Marian Ryan and Others Share Insights with EAL's Volunteer Tutors

November 9, Woburn---Volunteers from Acton, Arlington, Concord, Bedford, Belmont, Lexington, Winchester, Woburn and other communities in Middlesex County gathered last week for the annual Volunteer Development Day hosted by English At Large (EAL), a nonprofit educational organization that offers free individual and small group instruction to adult immigrants seeking English language skills to help them adapt to life in the United States.

Speakers at the event included Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan; Alejandro Cimadoro, Coordinator of Medical Interpreter Services at Massachusetts General Hospital; Norah Alaraifi Softic, attorney with the Immigration Legal Services Unit at Catholic Charities in Boston; and EAL's AmeriCorps Member Gretchen Kellogg.

"The purpose of the Volunteer Development Day is to provide our volunteers with new information that will help them better support their learners," says Csilla Tambor, EAL's director of volunteer engagement. District Attorney Ryan updated the volunteers on how to help immigrants detect and avoid scams to which they might be especially susceptible. Mr. Cimadoro discussed the legal right to interpreter services in the healthcare setting, and Ms. Alaraifi Softic explained other aspects of immigrant rights and pathways and barriers to citizenship. At the conclusion of the program, Ms. Kellogg presented a variety of new interactive language-learning activities for EAL volunteers to add to their toolkits.

"We are very grateful to the presenters who shared their knowledge and empowered our volunteers to improve their service to learners," says EAL Executive Director Maureen Willis. "We also want to acknowledge the key role of businesses and other partners in the community that provide ongoing support to EAL and helped make the Development Day a special success, including Cummings Properties, Sal's Pizza in Woburn, and Arlington Food Link."

English At Large offers services to more than 550 immigrants annually through a network of more than 250 volunteers in 21 communities in Middlesex County. These services range from training volunteers to teach English, helping immigrants understand and become integrated into American culture, and providing career support services through EAL's Career Access Lab. To learn more about this 47-year-old organization, visit www.englishatlarge.org.

Picture Caption: Maureen Willis (left) and Csilla Tambor (right), leaders of the nonprofit English At Large (EAL), welcome Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan and Woburn Police Chief Robert Ferullo to EAL's annual Volunteer Development Day. EAL volunteers provide free individual and group English lessons to immigrants in 21 towns in Middlesex County.