

English At Large recently held an event to honor and thank our volunteers for their dedication and service. Hosted at the Woburn Public Library, our esteemed guests feasted on pizza donated by Flatbread of Bedford and *Sweet Indulgences* provided by Seasons 52 Burlington, and had the opportunity to meet other volunteers from across our service area. For the program, staff staged an English At Large Volunteer Awards ceremony, stating that “EAL volunteers deserve to be recognized just as much if not more than any actor or musician”. Here are the short tributes, written by EAL staff, to those volunteers who joined us for this special event in their honor.

Pam A.

Pam joined the one-to-one tutoring program last fall. For her first EAL learner, Pam gladly took on the challenge of working with a complete beginner learner. She spends a lot of time researching basic survival English instructional resources for her learner, and her tutoring sessions are challenging and rigorous. At the same time, she approaches her learner with empathy and patience. Before joining English At Large, Pam lived in Mexico, and volunteered in her town as an English teacher. Pam, we are so fortunate that you chose to volunteer with English At Large. Thank you for joining our world!

Amanda B.

Amanda joined English At Large in December 2018 as a Conversation Group Facilitator. Amanda is currently working with her third conversation group. She and her co-facilitators Deb and Monica have helped their group speak with confidence on a broad range of topics: from things to do in Boston, to Earth Day, ... to learning the English names of common kitchen gadgets! Amanda recently joined an EAL committee to help us plan our way forward. Amanda, thank you for bringing your great dedication, creativity, serious learning, and a world of fun to learners, and for supporting the present and future work of English At Large!

Denis B.

Meet our go-to guy who has been an immense help to EAL staff with testing new initiatives and programs. Denis willingly and cheerfully provides his valuable and logical input. By the way, if you are a tutor and you like the new version of the monthly tutor report format, please stop and say thank you to Denis for his assistance in streamlining a form that helps our staff collect valuable information about the hard work our tutors and learners invest in learning. Denis joined English At Large as a tutor five years ago, in 2015, and has opened up new worlds for his learners by helping them become US citizens, communicating more effectively in the workplace, and writing and delivering a speech in English at the EAL tutoring graduation ceremony. Denis, your help and support mean the world to English At Large!

Phyllis B.

Phyllis is an English At Large legend, one of our longest serving volunteers. She joined English At Large SIXTEEN years ago, in 2004! To put this in perspective: in 2004, Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook, Poland had just joined the EU, and Tom Brady had only two Super Bowl Championship rings. Since 2004, Phyllis has devoted more than 700 hours of instruction and tutored six learners. Phyllis also volunteered as an intake assessor, meeting and interviewing learners for enrollment in the EAL tutoring program. The wealth of instruction and guidance Phyllis has given her learners includes: writing skills, conversational skills, pronunciation practice, improved reading comprehension, civics studies, interview practice, preparing for new job skills, volunteering in the community, and obtaining US citizenship. Phyllis is always excited to meet her next learner and start a new tutoring journey. Phyllis, we are inspired by your service, and honor your work with English At Large! Thank you for making a world of difference!

Barbara C.

This is Barbara's 10th year volunteering with English At Large! Barbara joined EAL as a one-to-one tutor, working with a learner from Brazil to help her achieve speaking fluency and work through the US citizenship application process. Since January 2013, Barbara has tirelessly co-facilitated no less than FIFTEEN Conversation Groups, and has warmly welcomed and helped hundreds of learners. Our staff often relies on Barbara's expertise at Conversation Group Facilitator training workshops and coffees; we will miss having you stop by our office for the Newcomers Almanacs! Happy 10th anniversary, Barbara, we are grateful for your long service to our learners and

mission!

Linda G.

Linda joined the EAL one-to-one tutoring program last September. She very quickly forged a strong bond with her learner, and rapidly identified her learner's most important learning needs. Linda's learner raves about her, and is her biggest fan! Linda has embraced the English At Large philosophy of meeting learners where they are, helping her learner improve her everyday English communication at work and in social interactions. Linda, thank you for taking this journey with your learner and with English At Large, and for being an inspiration to your learner!

Jean H.

Jean joined English At Large in December, 2018, as a Conversation Group Facilitator, and is now co-leading her fourth group in Winchester! Jean brings vast academic, educational, and volunteer experience to enrich her learners and help them communicate more effectively and confidently. She enlivens her Friday morning group with her passion for art and creativity, always finding uniquely creative, visual, and hands-on ways to get learners engaged -- from art tours of the library to a show and tell of unique kitchen gadgetry, Jean always makes group sessions memorable. Jean, your dedication means the world to our learners!

Lorraine K.

Lorraine joined English At Large last fall, and is tutoring a woman from Jordan with three young children. Lorraine provides instruction, guidance and support on topics and skills that directly interest her learner. They have had discussions about photography, and Lorraine's encouragement motivated her learner to volunteer at an international event at her children's school. Lorraine has contributed to learning and education in previous volunteer roles, and her goal for her learners is that they be able to communicate confidently in their communities. We're so glad that you have chosen English At Large to contribute your talents and energy. Thank you, Lorraine, for making your learner the focal point of your instruction!

Amanda M.

Amanda first joined English at Large as a tutor in 2017. Since then, she has helped her two learners not only grow in their language skills, but achieve some seriously life-changing goals, including acceptance into a college program in the U.S. In 2018, she took on even more responsibility as an English at Large test assessor, meeting with learners across our service area, and allowing them to see all the progress they made with their tutor. We are inspired by Amanda's constant and humble dedication to lifting those up around her who are most in need -- Amanda, you truly make the world a better place!

Elaine M.

Elaine joined English at Large in September 2018 as an office volunteer. She helps our staff with a variety of office projects, and her sharp eye and excellent organizational skills have been a tremendous support with the behind-the-scenes work that keeps English At Large operations running smoothly. Elaine adds her human touch to writing learner stories, having written dozens of learner bios to help tutors choose the right learner match. Elaine, thank you for your world of support and for being a dedicated member of our office team!

Cathy M.

Cathy joined English At Large in September 2015 as a one-to-one tutor. After completing a year of tutoring with her learner from Iran, Cathy joined the Conversation Group program and has since facilitated TWELVE consecutive conversation group sessions in less than five years! Cathy is a powerhouse of instructional ideas and best practices, and she brings great creativity and energy to every conversation group meeting. She has organized field trips into the community for her conversation groups, including trips to Wilson Farms in Lexington, and a visit to Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House in Concord. The list continues: Cathy regularly and graciously shares her instructional best practices at new Conversation Group Facilitator training workshops, and at EAL Volunteer coffees and conferences. Cathy, thank you for setting the world on fire with your commitment and generosity of spirit.

Hicham M.

Hicham joined the Board of Directors of English At Large in 2015 and became our President in 2016. His meteoric rise is undoubtedly due to his talents as an arbitrator and problem solver, skills he developed as a Human Resource professional in the hospitality sector. Hicham lights up the room with his smile, and we are grateful for his thoughtful and caring leadership during the last 3 years. Hicham, you make a difference in our world every day.

Eve N.

Eve joined English At Large as a Conversation Group facilitator in the fall of 2015 and our board in August 2016, serving as Secretary during 2018 and 2019 as well as chair of the Marketing Committee. She is my go-to person to provide editorial and sound advice, and has been a powerful ambassador and advocate for English At Large not only in her community but among our delegation at the State House. Eve you make our world a better place and your help and support makes our work a little easier.

Marilyn P.

Marilyn joined EAL as a tutor in the Fall of 2018, working diligently to help her learner, a young mother from Syria, master basic English skills and learn how to communicate effectively with her children's teachers and doctors. She encouraged her learner to utilize engaging library resources for English learning, including Hoopla, audio books and videos, opening many doors for her learner to navigate in this new world. Marilyn also supports EAL's mission by sharing her tutoring experiences with new volunteers, and has helped us pilot new learner initiatives. Marilyn, thank you for always willingly stepping in to share your expertise and wisdom with the English At Large family!

Elisabeth P.

Elisabeth joined English At Large in the spring of 2011. For the past NINE years, Elisabeth has committed many hours and much energy to helping her learners succeed. With her fantastic sense of humor and great energy, Elisabeth has co-facilitated TWELVE conversation groups and will also join the tutoring world this spring. Elisabeth has helped our staff with projects as an office volunteer, making many phone calls to learners on our waiting list. But wait, there's more... Elisabeth is also an active volunteer in her community, working as a national parks representative in Lexington. You might see her around town, leading a tour on the Lexington Liberty ride and at local historic sites. Elisabeth, you totally rock the park ranger uniform! Thank you for making our little corner of the world a better place!

Qimei R.

Qimei joined English At Large last fall as a one-to-one tutor. As a former English language learner, she understands the challenges of mastering English, and brings many of her own language learning methods to her tutoring. During her tutor training, Qimei enriched every discussion with useful ideas and tools for tutoring, including practice ideas and online resources that she says have served her well along the way. By the way, for English practice she highly recommends YouTube videos, and listening to the radio whenever and wherever possible. Qimei has also contributed to an EAL focus group to help learners find ways to incorporate English language practice into their everyday activities. Qimei, thank you for bringing your inspiring ideas to your learner and to English At Large!

Matt R.

Matt joined English At Large as a board member in May 2016, also joining the Programs Committee and serving as its chair. Matt was one of our first Career Mentors, providing individual support to a learner in our Career Access Lab as she prepared for interviews in the financial field. His knowledge of finance and accounting, his experience in the nonprofit sector and his understated but unstoppable commitment to the future of English At Large is what makes his contributions so invaluable. And we love his children. Thank you Matt for using your talents to help shape a vision for our world.

Jean R.

Jean joined English At Large in early 2019 as a Career Access Lab volunteer, helping learners polish their job search skills. She became a tutor last fall, and is working with a Beginner English learner, a young mother from Algeria. From their very first sessions, Jean has related her instruction to her learner's immediate survival English needs. She uses items from real life in her tutoring sessions: clocks, calendars, supermarket flyers, and money. Her practice activities are visual, and she makes sure that her learner always uses full sentences, even as a beginner. Jean, thank you for giving your learner a great start, and the confidence she needs to communicate basic information to people in her community. We think the world of you, Jean!

Cameron S.

Cameron joined English At Large in February 2016 as a One-to-One tutor. The three learners Cameron tutored (from China, Russia and Tibet) achieved great things under her guidance and instruction, including applying for US citizenship, and gaining qualifications for more satisfying work. In fact, Cameron specifically asked to tutor learners who had challenging goals to achieve. Cameron joined the EAL Conversation Group program in 2018, and currently co-facilitates a conversation group in Arlington with Donna Wainwright. Their learners have practiced speaking about a variety of topics, from current events to culture shock, and recently participated in a group field trip to a local art gallery. Cam, thank you for being a world of inspiration to your learners!

Bonny S.

Bonny has been volunteering with English At Large for EIGHT years! Bonny is currently tutoring her third learner, and has provided valuable and practical guidance to help her learner find more suitable and satisfying employment. Bonny contributes her many talents to English At Large in other ways, too. In addition to tutoring, Bonny has also co-led conversation groups, inspired EAL's funders by talking about the impact of our services, shared her volunteer experiences with prospective EAL volunteers, and brought her wisdom to English At Large committees. Bonny we are grateful for your support and dedication. Thank you for sharing your vision of a better world with English At Large!

Mihir S.

New to the area and looking to make a difference, Mihir joined English At Large in 2015 as a volunteer tutor. During his tenure he has tutored 3 learners, all who successfully completed the program. Mihir consistently set high standards for his learners, and his rigorous lessons challenged his learners to make great strides to learn the English they needed to reach their personal, professional and educational goals. At the same time, his learners tell us that Mihir is thoughtful, professional, patient and flexible, all traits of a truly wonderful tutor. In 2016 Mihir joined the Programs Committee, in 2017 and 2018 chaired the committee for our learner graduations, and in 2019 joined the EAL Board. Mihir, thank you for making English At Large part of your world and for sharing your talents with your learners and with us.

Joan S.

Joan is currently co-leading her FIFTEENTH conversation group with English at Large this semester... WOW! In addition to being a longtime group leader, Joan was highly dedicated to two learners in the tutoring program from 2010 – 2014, sometimes tutoring upwards of 14 hours per month. Joan brings her experience in education to enriching the quality of instruction she offers her learners. Thank you Joan for making a world of difference!

Maggie W.

Maggie joined English At Large in the fall of 2018. As a tutor she has helped her learner master citizenship exam questions and makes a point of providing instruction in all language areas, including writing, reading, and conversational skills. She and her learner have also had discussions about an often-overlooked element of communication: body language!

If you haven't met Maggie yet, you'll be interested to know that she is a puppeteer by profession! She is generously sharing her passion for puppets with a donation to the annual English At Large auction, which opens February 21st. Maggie infuses great creativity and empathy into her tutoring. Maggie, thank you for sharing your artistic gift with your learner and with English At Large!

Yan X.

Yan started out as a learner in the tutoring program in 2013, and has since been an asset to English at Large as both a volunteer Conversation Group leader, and more recently, as a test administrator. Yan is always there to support our staff in the test administration process, travelling across our service area to collect important information on learner progress. She was even kind enough to let us "borrow" her wonderful son for a summer to help support our staff in the office. Thank you to Yan -- and family -- for being an invaluable part of the EAL "world!"