



Partners in English Language Learning

Spring/Summer
2026

We help English language learners become thriving members of our community by offering one-on-one English language tutoring and building bridges that foster cross-cultural respect, understanding, and friendship.

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Letter from the PiELL President

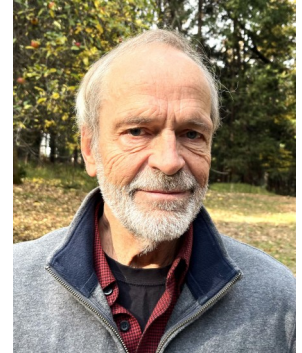
Dear PiELL Friends,

As I'm sure that you've all noticed, ever new and disturbing layers are being added to our news cycles, seemingly on a daily basis. Some of us in Nevada County may feel partially isolated from the news of wars, ICE, politics, budget cuts, and more. But for many — including those in the immigrant community that PiELL serves — it can be overwhelming. Our students' needs are greater than ever, and PiELL's focus remains unchanged. If anything, we've heightened our efforts, providing a trusted resource in an uncertain world.

For 40 years, PiELL has provided English language instruction and related support in western Nevada County, free to recipients and reliant upon 35 or so community volunteers. In this newsletter you'll find brief stories from several of our volunteers, whose reflections help illustrate what we're about. Perhaps they'll also inspire you. While we have many long-term participants, our student and volunteer base is constantly changing. If you or a friend might be interested in volunteering, please reach out to us. No experience is required — just a willingness to help. Similarly, if you know of someone who might benefit from our services, please have them contact us.

Thanks so much to all of you, our volunteers, donors, and supporters!

Chris Crain, PiELL President



Chris Crain

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Jose Gamino and Tosca Bini, two members of the PiELL Board of Directors, participated in the Sierra College "Meet Your Match" Jobs and Volunteer Fair on April 14th. College students and other community members visited the table to learn more about becoming a volunteer tutor with PiELL.



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We are grateful to our donors! We do our best to acknowledge every gift. However, if your name is missing from this list – or if there is an error in the listing – please let us know.

Why I Volunteer with PiELL

We recently asked our tutors to share their thoughts about volunteering as a tutor with PiELL. Following are some of their responses.

From Ann Guerra:

As a new tutor with PiELL, I was warmly welcomed and provided with training and materials to use in tutoring. I also was matched with a student with whom I have much in common — except language! My student and I have gotten to know each other, and we laugh a lot and cheer each successful lesson. I do not know what it is like to live in a community where my language is not primary. Finding and keeping work, conversing with neighbors, healthcare providers and others is certainly challenging when language is a barrier. As a tutor, I'm grateful to have an opportunity to help ease the way to greater community inclusion while benefiting from new friendships.

From Lourdes Vose:

Before I retired, I helped families, many of which did not speak English. Knowing about PiELL, I always recommended this valuable resource to them. I believe that

people living in a country should attempt to learn the language and culture, while also retaining their own. While I worked, I helped families indirectly, and often felt caught in the middle of too much red tape. I applied to volunteer with PiELL because I wanted to have a direct impact on the families. Tutoring allows me to be creative in how to help, with support at hand.

From Maureen Wilson:

My student is a delightful young mother who came to Grass Valley from Mexico three years ago. We've been working together for about a year. She now has two children, 18 months and 6 months old, who keep her very busy. We meet at her apartment once a week while the children are napping, although they don't always cooperate by staying asleep! In spite of her busy life, she is eager to learn, always completes her homework, and is very appreciative of my efforts to help her. We are able to converse with simple sentences, and she understands more and more each week. It's very gratifying to see her progress, and it's also a lot of fun!

From Cecelia Royal:

The PiELL program has connected me to someone I would never have otherwise met. My student comes to every PiELL session with a great sense of mission: She wants to be able to advocate for her young children by speaking English more fluently. When she arrived in the U.S., she felt very much alone in a foreign land, with no friends or knowledge of the area in which she was to live. What she did have was a husband and two children she dearly loves. Language is the great connector, and I am getting to know her and her struggle. Any opportunity to help her is a gift to me because I receive an enormous sense of purpose and gratitude in working with her. She is so appreciative, and working together, we are forging her connection not only to English but also to her new community. Tutoring is a really wonderful way to feel purposeful and alive.

Interested in becoming a PiELL tutor? Visit www.piell.org and click on the "Volunteer" tab to learn more!